GREYFOX BOOKS

MEGA

BOOK COLLECTION 16ビットパワー

A VISUAL GUIDE TO THE SEGA MEGADRIVE

AN UNOFFICAL GUIDE TO A VAST COLLECTION OF SEGA MEGADRIVE
TITLES THAT DEFINED A GENERATION OF VIDEO GAME PLAYERS

DARREN DOYLE

MEGADRIVE
MEGA CD
32X
16-BIT
100%
UNOFFICAL
A VIDEO GAME BOOK PUBICATION
CLASSIC GRAPHICS 16 MEGA POWER
POWER — ON
10-
5-
0-
PHONES VOL.
POWER
ON
OFF
CARTDRIGE LOCK

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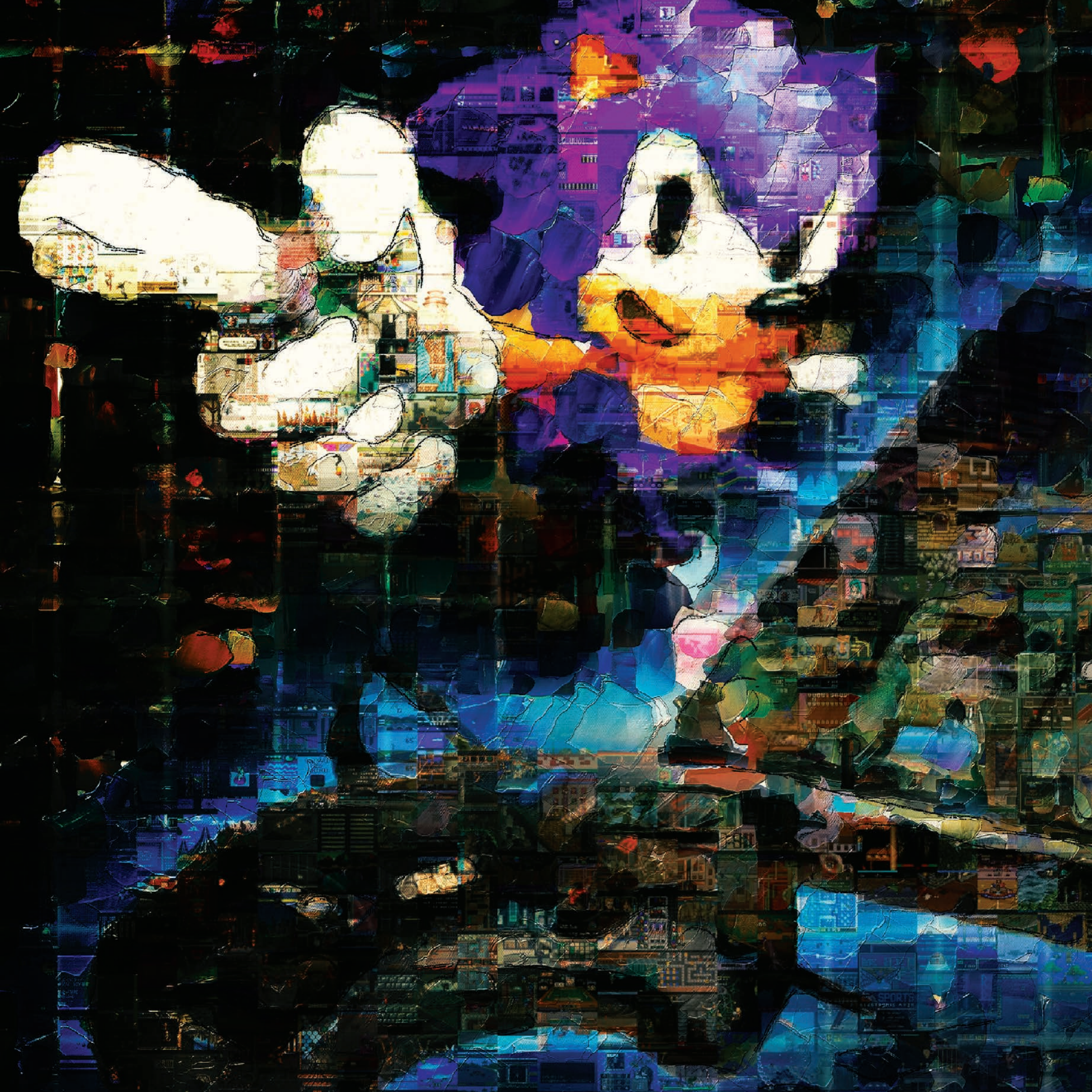

SELECT PLAYER

ANDREW FISHER

ANDREW FISHER HAS BEEN A FREELANCE WRITER FOR 30 YEARS, SPECIALISING IN RETRO GAMES AND THE COMMODORE 64. AS DARREN'S SIDEKICK, HE HELPED PROOFREAD AND CHECK COIN-OP: THE ARCADE GUIDE, AND HE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MANY OTHER RETRO BOOKS AND MAGAZINES - INCLUDING RETRO GAMER, WIREFRAME.

THE REVIVED ZZAP! 64 AND FUSION. CURRENTLY WRITING NEW BOOKS OF HIS OWN FOR PUBLICATION IN 2021-2022 THROUGH WWW.C64BOOKS.CO.UK

SPECIAL MOVE: SPOTTING A TYPO OR INCORRECT FACT.

HEIGHT: 5' 10"

WEIGHT: 12 STONE

DARREN DOYLE

THE MEGA DRIVE TO ME HAS TO BE ONE OF THOSE MAGICAL GOLDEN MOMENTS IN VIDEO GAMING HISTORY WHERE YOU COULD ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE PROPER ARCADE STYLE GAMINGS IN THE HOME UNLIKE WHAT WE GOT ON THE HOME COMPUTER SCENE WE ALL ENJOYED FOR YEARS.

BUT WHEN I'D SEEN SEGA'S NEW HARDWARE I JUST KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO BE SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL AND AFTER YEARS AND YEARS. I AM FINALLY RELIVING THOSE SEGA MEGA DRIVE FANTASIES ONCE MORE AND ONE OF MANY THE REASON WHY I HAVE CREATED THIS AMAZING SEGA BOOK FOR ALL YOU SEGA FANS AROUND THE WORLD.

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL. ENJOY!

DYLAN RAJ

VIDEO GAMES HAVE BEEN A MASSIVE PART OF MY LIFE SINCE DAD BOUGHT ME A MASTER SYSTEM IN THE CHRISTMAS OF 1990. I STARTED A SMALL BLOG SITE CALLED ARCADE ATTACK IN 2014 WHICH HAS NOW EVOLVED INTO A RELATIVELY POPULAR RETRO GAMING PODCAST.

WRITING IS A PASSION OF MINE AND I WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BOOK TO PAY HOMAGE TO THOSE GAMES THAT ESSENTIALLY BROUGHT ME UP. AND ALSO BECAUSE DARREN IS A GREAT GUY AND TREASURE OF THE COMMUNITY. I'VE CHOSEN LARSEN AS MY AVATAR AS WE SADLY LOST ETERNAL CHAMPIONS CREATOR AND FRIEND OF THE SHOW MICHAEL LATHAM IN 2021. RIP MY FRIEND.

EUGENIO ANGUEIRA

EUGENIO HAS BEEN AN AVID VIDEO GAMER SINCE HE WAS INTRODUCED TO THE ATARI 2600 BACK IN THE EARLY 80'S. SINCE THEN, HE HAS AMASSED A COLLECTION OF 23 SYSTEMS AND HANDHELDS WITH OVER 2000 GAMES.HE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN VARIOUS RETRO GAMING FORUMS, WHERE HE SHARES HIS LOVE FOR VIDEO GAMES,AND WHERE HE IS KNOWN AS "THE LEGENDARY" TREKMD.

HE HAS CONTRIBUTED RETRO GAME AND SYSTEM ARTICLES TO RETRO VIDEO GAMER FORUM,THE RETRO GAMING TIMES, VECTORBOLT MAGAZINE, AND HOMEBREW HEROES MAGAZINE.OH, AND HE'S ALSO AN AVID STAR TREK FAN.

GEORGE W.J.

I'VE ALWAYS HAD A SOFT SPOT FOR SEGA STUFF. MY DAD OWNED A MEGADRIVE AND I REMEMBER PLAYING A BOATLOAD OF SONIC. I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET MY OWN MEGADRIVE AS A GIFT AND IT REALLY INSPIRED ME TO GET INTO THE RETRO SCENE AND GAMING IN GENERAL. IT'S A PASSION THAT I VALUE, WHICH LED TO ME GETTING A DEGREE IN GAME DESIGN AND A VIDEO GAME ADDICTION THAT HASN'T BEEN SATIATED YET.

IT'S BEEN GREAT TO SHARE MY PASSION FOR THE CLASSICS. THESE ARE AMAZING GAMES, AND HOPEFULLY EVERYONE CAN SEE WHAT MAKES THEM SPECIAL!

JAMIE BATTISON

HELLO ALL, JAMIE HERE. I AM A CONTENT CREATOR BASED IN THE UK. MY GAMING PASSION STARTED AT THE VERY BEGINNING. YEP RIGHT BACK AT A TIME WHEN 8-BIT COMPUTERS RULED THE WORLD.

MY PASSION FOR GAMING IS STILL VERY STRONG TODAY. OFTEN I AM WRITING REVIEWS FOR VARIOUS GAMING PLATFORMS ONLINE, COVERING EVERYTHING RETRO GAMING RELATED FROM BOOKS TO NEW HOMEBREW GAMES. I STILL OWN MANY OF THE SYSTEMS I PURCHASED BACK IN THE DAY AND IF I WAS TO PICK A FAVOURITE, IT WOULD BE THE SEGA MEGADRIVE. SHHHHH DON'T TELL ANYONE. JUST INCASE I DON'T GET ANYMORE GIGS.

CONTINUE

KARL RYAN

BEING A LITTLE BUT YOUNGER, I UNFORTUNATELY MISSED THE EARLY DAYS OF GAMING. THIS HOWEVER, MEANT THAT THE MEGA DRIVE WAS MY EARLIEST HOME CONSOLE, AND I'VE BEEN PLAYING IT SINCE I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO HOLD A CONTROLLER. IT PERSISTED FOR SO MANY YEARS IN MY HOUSE, AND WHEN I STARTED WORKING I WAS STILL BUYING GAMES FOR IT, DESPITE MORE POWERFUL AND MODERN CONSOLES EMERGING AT THE TIME.

THE MEGA DRIVE WAS INSTRUMENTAL TO THE INDUSTRY AND GIVES ME WARM, FOND MEMORIES OF LONG GAMING SESSIONS, AND TO THIS DAY I'LL DUST OFF THE CONSOLE ON OCCASION TO RELIVE MY GLORY DAYS.

LEONARD KIGGUNDU

GROWING UP, THE ARCADE WAS MY GAMING HAVEN AND THE PROSPECT OF SO MANY TITLES FROM SEGA'S RICH ARCADE HISTORY BEING AVAILABLE ON A HOME CONSOLE WAS A HUGE DRAW FOR ME. THE MEGA DRIVE WAS ESSENTIALLY A CUT DOWN VERSION OF SEGA'S ARCADE TECH AT THE TIME AND ITS ABILITY TO HANDLE FAST PACED, ACTION ORIENTATED TITLES WAS THE MAIN FACTOR IN MY PURCHASE WAY BACK IN THE EARLY NINETIES.

I'VE SINCE GONE ON TO COLLECT EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING MEGA DRIVE RELATED AS THE CONSOLE CONTINUES TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT PART OF MY GAMING HABIT. THE FACT THAT THERE ARE STILL MEGA DRIVE TITLES BEING DEVELOPED TODAY IS A TESTAMENT TO ITS LEGACY.

LUKE MUSSETT

I GREW UP IN THE 90'S ON A DIET OF COMICS, VIDEO GAMES AND WRESTLING. FORTUNATELY FOR ME, MY DAD WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN GAMING AND I HAD HIS GUIDING HAND TO ALL OF THE GOOD STUFF. PLAYING TOEJAM AND EARL AND ECCO THE DOLPHIN STARTED OUR MEGA DRIVE ODYSSEY AND FROM THERE I INVESTED HEAVILY IN ALL THINGS SONIC AND STREETS OF RAGE.

INTERESTS BRANCHED OUTWARDS TO OTHER PLATFORMS AND GENRE'S BUT IT ALWAYS CAME BACK TO THESE TWO SERIES. FOR THIS BOOK, I HAVE REVISITED MANY CLASSICS AND I HOPE READING IT ENCOURAGES YOU TO DO THE SAME.

NEIL REIVE

I STARTED MY RETRO GAMING JOURNEY WITH AN AMSTRAD CPC464, THEN A COMMODORE 64 BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE 16-BIT WONDER SEGA MEGA DRIVE. MY FAVOURITE GENRE IS SPORT AND STRATEGY, BUT I WON'T SAY NO TO RPGS, ADVENTURES OR PLATFORMERS.

MY LOVE FOR RETRO GAMING HAS LED ME TO VARIOUS PROJECTS, INCLUDING AMSTRAD ACTION TRIBUTE MAGAZINE, RETROACTION MAGAZINE, OUT-OF-PRINT ARCHIVE, AMSTRAD CPC: THE GAMES COMPANION, AND MORE. SOME FAVOURITE MEGA DRIVE GAMES ARE NHL HOCKEY '94, SHINING FORCE, BUCK ROGERS: COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY, SPEEDBALL 2, SENSIBLE SOCCER, PGA TOUR GOLF II, DECAP ATTACK, FLASHBACK, STRIDER, GHOULS 'N GHOSTS.

PIXIE POISON

HI THERE! I'M PIXIE, A FREELANCE WRITER, PERFORMER AND CONTENT CREATOR HAILING FROM A SMALL TOWN IN LANCASHIRE. FROM THE MOMENT I LAID MY HANDS ON A SEGA GAME GEAR AT AGE 5, I WAS HOOKED. GAMING WAS AN EXPERIENCE UNLIKE ANY OTHER AND I WAS EAGER TO EXPERIENCE AND SOAK UP EVERY LAST DROP OF IT.

AT AGE 30, I FINALLY COMBINED THIS PASSION WITH MY LOVE OF WRITING AND VENTURED INTO THE WORLD OF GAMING JOURNALISM. BUT EVEN AFTER 25 YEARS OF EVOLVING OBSESSION, I STILL REVERE THE CONSOLES AND GAMES OF YESTERYEAR AND GIVEN HALF A CHANCE, I CAN TALK FOR DAYS ABOUT THEM.

IT WAS AN HONOUR TO BE PART OF THIS PROJECT CELEBRATING THESE AMAZING GAMES. LONG MAY IT CONTINUE!

RICH BYLES

IT WAS CHRISTMAS 1991 THAT RICHARD RECEIVED HIS MEGA DRIVE, AND HIS LOVE OF GAMING WAS BORN. THE STREETS OF RAGE AND GOLDEN AXE SERIES WERE AMONGST HIS FAVOURITES, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SO MANY GREAT GAMES IT'S HARD TO NARROW IT DOWN. THAT CHRISTMAS WAS ALSO THE BIRTH OF HIS ENDURING LOYALTY TO SEGA: IF THEY RELEASED A NEW CONSOLE TOMORROW, HE WOULD BE AT THE HEAD OF THE QUEUE!

HE STILL HARBOURS HIS CHILDHOOD AMBITION OF ONE DAY MAKING A VIDEO GAME, BUT FOR THE TIME BEING CONSOLES HIMSELF BY WORKING IN MOTORSPORT, HIS OTHER MAIN PASSION IN LIFE.

WING SEE-LI

WING SEE LI IS A FORMER FANFICTION WRITER AND NOW A FREELANCE JOURNALIST WITH 163 ARTICLES (AND COUNTING). SHE FREELANCED AS A JOURNALIST FOR 6 YEARS SO FAR. HER BYLINES ARE METRO UK (GAMECENTRAL), PLAYSTATION UNIVERSE, GAMESMASTER MAGAZINE, FILM STORIES MAGAZINE, THE CAT MAGAZINE (PUBLISHED BY CATS PROTECTION), NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY, THE MIGRAINE TRUST, CHARITYSANE, COTSWOLD LIFE MAGAZINE AND MORE.

WHEN SHE'S NOT OCCUPIED WITH FREELANCE JOURNALISM, SHE PLAYS VIDEO GAMES AND LISTENS TO HER FAVOURITE MUSIC AND SONGS IN HER SPARE TIME. FAV GAME: RISTAR.

INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone, firstly, I wish to thank all of you for downloading the "Mega Collection Book" without the continued support from our customers this simply would not exist. I am Darren Doyle the author of the Mega Book Collection and wanted to share something about me before you move on to the amazing content that awaits you.

Before creating the Mega Collection Book, I established the Greyfox Books brand in 2019 with my very book covering the Atari 8-bit home computers called *"Atari: a Visual History"* followed in 2020 with the immensely popular *"Coin-Op: The Arcade Guide"* both meeting great success via Kickstarter and continued support through our website Greyfox Books.

For as long as I can remember I have always wanted to create books in a fashion that mirrored the content I wanted to write about in both in the asthenics of the hardware and software that gave them their identity by design and the Sega Mega Drive was no exception. My very first experience with the Sega Mega Drive happened all the way back in December 1989 while still getting to grips with my brand new awesome Commodore Amiga 500, I received a call from an acquaintance of mine who had just imported the Japanese variant of the Sega Megadrive with two titles "Rambo III" and "Super Shinobi aka Revenge of Shinobi" and at the time had no glue to what he was talking about? And when he arrived he was extremely protective and cloak and dagger of his new toy and could see why considering how much he had paid for it at the time. My Poor "Miggy" never got a look that evening.

I knew nothing of this machines existence up until then and when that power on button was switched on and that iconic Sega logo flashed on and appeared for the first time all I had was a flashback of my arcade experiences of the Sega of coin-op arcade days and exposed to the intro of this dark mysterious ninja deflecting those "Shurikens", I was in awe, no loading times, not waiting, only instance gratification, "What was this?". Don't ask me how I managed to convince the guy to loan me this incredible piece of kit for the weekend as you'd expect, not without some form of insurances I wouldn't let anything happen to his Sega baby. I could not get over how fast the games ran and played as I didn't know what the difference was between 50hz and 60hz refresh rates back then, the games just played like a dream, nothing else compared to what I was used to at the time and that music from Yuzo Koshiro was out of this world. WOW!

I had just received a glimpse of this mind blowing world of the 16-bit generation and knew I had to have one of these machines for myself and eventually got one when they were released in Europe a year later and bagged the machine and a copy of Revenge of Shinobi as I loved the arcade original and truly enjoy this next chapter in the franchise and regret horribly selling it on to fund the Super Nintendo Entertainment system's arrival in 1993, but in saying that I got some great memories of the Sega Mega Drive from the very small collection of games I had at the time and always admired this great console from afar during my Snes days with a little envy to what was exclusively been released on the mega drive at the time. I really should have gotten back into the platform, but alas, I knew I would be revisiting this amazing machine at some stage later in my life.

Well, this time is now and with the help of the incredible contributions from the fantastic Sega fans you can read about on the previous page, this book would simply not have been created without their phenomenal help and input to the book and wanted to allow the book to have that expansive take on these amazing games and experiences people had with the Sega Mega drive and hope you feel that this is portrayed in the book as you go through it. So I hope you enjoy what we have put together here for you and everyone that loves the Sega 16-bit platform. I hope we have managed to coin that killer slogan Sega of America deemed "Genesis Does What Nintendo Don't". ■

Darren Doyle
Greyfox Books

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BOOK FOREWORD

With Dave "GamesAnimal" Perry

WHEN GAMING GOT MEGA

The Mega Drive first pushed its way into my consciousness when I was working in the late 80s on the subscriber magazines of Europe's largest mail order company, Special Reserve. At Special Reserve we were of course, always trying to keep ahead of the competition on the retail side of things, and everyone was especially excited about the upcoming PAL launch of the Mega Drive in 1990 and also the rumours of an insanely fast platform game due for release less than a year later.

Personally, at this time, I was an Amiga man. Consoles seemed like a very American idea to me. Less a computer and more of a toy. In fact, in the UK, apart from the early Binatone and Atari machines, the majority of the burgeoning UK gaming community had been brought up on the advent of home computers like the Speccy and C64, and later the ST and A500. Consoles like the Master System and NES seemed like mere toys by comparison, something for younger kids, but a change was coming, and none of us were really prepared for the kind of seismic affect that the arrival of the Mega Drive would have upon our favourite pastime.

When I began working on the creation of the GamesMaster TV show for Channel 4, this new 16 bit console was in its infancy, but we still managed to get early games like Sonic the Hedgehog and Road Rash onto some of the first shows, thanks to their undeniable quality and playability. But, it would actually be in my next job that my lifelong connection to this iconic machine would be galvanised forever.

In 1992 I moved to Trowbridge and joined Paragon Publishing to work on their new title, Sega Pro Magazine. And so began my long running association with the Mega Drive in both my professional and my personal life. You see, back in those days there was traditionally always a two machine battle for supremacy in the games market... and for a long time the competition in the console wars between Sega and Nintendo would be extremely fierce indeed. Personally, I always chose Sega and subsequently, as a competitive player, Nintendo would often prove to be something of an Achilles heel for me, but it was never a decision that I regretted. Not for a second.

For years I was fortunate enough to work on and launch many great gaming magazines like Sega Pro, Mega Power, Saturn Plus, and multi-format titles like GamesWorld and XGen and during these times the Mega Drive never failed to impress me with how consistently it continued to provide a vast library of high quality and varied releases for the demanding games-playing public to devour. From original titles like Sonic, Ecco the Dolphin and Shining Force, to arcade conversions like Mortal Kombat there was something for all gaming tastes, plus. there was also the vast array of sporting licences, that would grow into huge franchises courtesy of companies like EA and which in the early 90s helped open the eyes and minds of players like myself to sports we had barely even considered before. For example, I learned the rules of American Football from the awesome John Madden series, and the names of Basketball's greatest players from playing titles like Bulls Versus Lakers and NBA Live 95.

And, as if all of this wasn't enough to keep us busy out there in magazine and tv land, Sega then decided to 'Frankenstein' the hell out of the Mega Drive with add-ones like the Mega CD and the 32X, and variations like the Wondermega and the Mega PC as the format continued to attempt grow and metamorphosise beyond the constraints of the original console. It really did seem around this time, that the Mega Drive was unstoppable. Sega even had their own sponsored Formula 1 car.

For me this small, lightweight, somewhat space-age looking black machine marked the turning point for the games industry and helped to drag it kicking and screaming out of the bedrooms and mail order clubs of the late 80s and onto the high streets and into the front rooms of the early 90s. With Sega's Mega Drive at the vanguard of the He fast growing videogames movement, what had once been a niche hobby for a few, had suddenly became an international youth phenomenon that grabbed the attention and imagination of the world, and would go on to develop into an industry that would surpass both the movie and music industries in the next millennium. How apt then it was that when this console first appeared it was called the Genesis.

Personal favourites for me through those Mega Drive heavy years included Electronic Arts' NHL franchise, most versions of which I considered myself pretty much unbeatable on, and the wonderfully quirky platformer Kid Chameleon. For our football fix, myself and my friends were crazy about the imported J-League games that we could get from our local import stores (remember those treasure troves?), with Fifa at this stage still awaiting its 3DO breakthrough to take it to the next level. As a competitive player and highly recognised gaming celebrity, I would take part in challenges all over the country on most weekends on games like Mortal Kombat and NBA Jam, and much later on the king of all fighting games, Street Fighter 2, although SNES players got that one long before we did, and I know that as soon as I finish writing this foreword, tons of other great games are going to force their way back into my mind and I'll kick myself for not mentioning them.

There is no doubting that the arrival of the Sega Mega Drive in the UK certainly kick started what would become known many years later as 'the golden age of gaming'. Never before had such a vast library of high quality titles been so readily available to a mainstream audience. Most importantly, no knowledge of computing was required to enjoy this new machine, consumers just turned it on and pushed the cartridge into the slot to begin playing. It was relatively inexpensive and fuss free, and was easily set up on the main television in the front room or bedroom. Suddenly, the whole world could game, and once they experienced the fun and challenges offered by the wonderful new world of 16 bit gaming there would be no stopping them.

16-PAGE
PURE
Racing 2
The most explosive race game of the year
SHADOW

07 MEGA BOOK COLLECTION

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
The ultimate computer game console

At the time of the North American Video Games Crash, Sega had been in the arcade business for several years but was still keen to stay ahead of the technological curve. Sega Enterprises in Japan had just released the Sega System 1. This was an adaptable hardware board used to power various arcade cabinets between 1983 and 1987, including Choplifter, Flicky, and Pitfall II: The Lost Caverns. In 1985, the board was updated to the Sega System 2 allowing more flexibility than its predecessor. Both of these boards were based on the 8-bit Zilog Z80, the same CPU used to power their Master System. However, the arcade boards had one dedicated to graphics, one to sound and various custom chips including the Sega 3155011 GPU, strike generator and tilemap chips. The hardware allowed Sega to release some pretty significant machines. Back in the 80s the arcades were a source of cutting-edge technology, but it didn't take long for home equipment to start catching up. Sega's cutting-edge solution was the Sega System 16 board released in late 1985, making use of a Motorola 68000 CPU, along with an Intel i8751 microcontroller and a Z80 clone for sound working alongside a Yamaha YM2151 sound chip.

This new hardware powered experiences such as Altered Beast, Dynamite Dux, Shinobi and Golden Axe. Although Sega had sold North American arcade distribution rights to Bally Midway in 1983, arcade machine manufacturer was still their backbone in Japan leading the surge in technology. But as we know Sega weren't blind to the home gaming industry, which was witnessing a resurgence with Nintendo's entertainment system, the Famicom. In 1987, they managed to find some footing in Europe for their first Western console, the Sega Master System, and the sales looked good in the region if a little sparse in the rest of the world. But it was enough to solidify Sega's belief that home hardware was the future. Sega had sunk their claws into Europe and Australia. Even with their superior 8-bit hardware, however, they were too late to rival Nintendo in Japan and North America. The obvious strategy was to head onwards and upwards. They needed to go all out, and this time be the first to grace the world with a revolutionary console and blow the entertainment system clean out of the water. Nintendo could keep their eight little bits; Sega were about to double it.

"The only problem was Sega needed some killer titles to convince the public to upgrade."

Sega was not a company to pause having launched the SG 1000, SG 1000 II, Mark 3 and Master system in quick succession. Work had already begun on the next generation of console instigated by ***Hayao Nakayama*** and led by ***Masami Ishikawa*** with ***Hideki Sato*** as the main designer. In October 1987 NEC, in collaboration with Hudson Soft, released the PC Engine to a great fanfare, the same time Sega's Master System was failing on their own shores. The PC Engine's technical ability over even the Master System was impressive and although the PC Engine's Hudson Soft HuC6280 CPU was technically an 8-bit processor, it had a 16-bit graphics processor and many advanced features allowing some impressive arcade conversions. This further solidified Sega's motives to go big, and they turned to the most obvious place: their System 16 arcade hardware.

"This was the Genesis of the Mega Drive" The new system's board would be built around the Motorola 68000 CPU clocked at 7.6mhz like the System 16 board. It was decided a Zilog Z80 should take control of the sound provided by the six channel Yamaha YM2612 FM synthesiser and the four channel Texas SN76489 PSG chip. This combination also allowed backwards compatibility with Master System titles. 72 kilobytes of RAM was provided alongside 64 kilobytes of video RAM. The YM2612 based video processor is an evolution of the Sega Master System VDP. It allowed the palette for 512 9-bit RGB colours, allowing a standard 64 on screen. This could be tripled through shadow and highlight use and even further with clever direct memory palette swaps. The hardware can accommodate a maximum of 320 by 480 interlaced pixels in PAL Mode with a total overscan of 423 x 624. Multiple multi-direction scrolling routines were made available, as well as semi transparency and a total of 80 on screen sprites. Very early models had a nine-pin DIN AV out, though it was quickly replaced by a mono eight-pin DIN allowing stereo sound, via the front audio jack. Like the Master System an edge connector was provided allowing bus expansion and the

16-BIT
arcade graphics plus digital stereo sound

whole system could be fed from the same power supply as the 8-bit line.

As for the control pads, well they're three (plus one) buttons of absolute glory. The design allows for some impressive system 16-bit abilities in a much more affordable package. Initially named the **Mark V**, the initial prototypes were ready in early 1988, and first appeared in the June 1988 edition of Beep! magazine. However, the Mark V name lacked the grunt to convey the impressive abilities of this 16-bit beast. Sega finally settled on Mega Drive to try and best the already grand sounding Master System, launching on the 29th of October 1988. In Japan, the date could hardly have been worse. Nintendo had launched Super Mario Brothers 3 just one week prior and most magazine front covers were awash with Mario rather than Sega's new system. However, the coverage the Mega Drive received was positive none the less. Sega's plan of releasing arcade follow-ups to a new home platform seemed a solid one, allowing a natural flow from the arcade into the home with titles such as Space Harrier 2 and Super Thunder Blade available from the go, alongside Altered Beast and Nonsense Theatre. Compared to the Famicom and PC Engine however, choice was somewhat lacking, and, despite its impressive capabilities, the Mega Drive would sell a moderate 400,000 units in its first year on home territory.

Various bizarre and somewhat nice peripherals were also introduced as push revenues, including the Sega Mega Answer, a complete online banking package created for Nagoya Bank, and the hardware was even adapted back to an arcade format released as the Sega Seaboard. But thankfully this was never really about Japan, a bigger market was waiting and if Sega moved quickly, they could get ahead of the curve. As 1989 came around, NEC was set to launch a PC Engine in North America as the remodelled TurboGrafx-16 drawing attention to its semi-16-bit architecture. This pushed Sega to announce an initial release date of 9th of January 1989, merely months after the Japanese launch. Originally, Sega tried to convince Atari to licence their machine. With the Master System still in the hands of distributor Tonka toys, Sega didn't really have an appropriate networking facility in America at the time. ***David Rosen***, who was vice president of Sega Enterprises, visited Atari's video game president ***Michael Katz***, who was interested in the deal, but negotiations broke down over money with ***Jack Tramiel*** more interested in pushing the Atari ST. However, this negotiation was not fruitless as it brought about a brainstorm of names for the Sega machine in the US. This was required as the Mega Drive name was already being used by Mega Drive Systems Inc, a producer of digital storage devices.

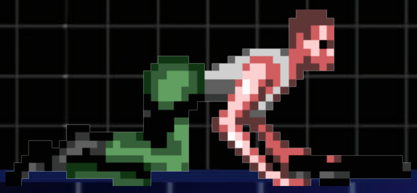
> **"Slotting and writing with Sega's continued advertising, pitching their machine as cool"**

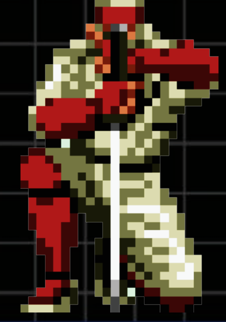
The name chosen would be one of Atari's suggestions: **Genesis**. This was appropriate given the largely Christian nature of the population and connotations to starting something new. Sega would launch the console via its reduced Sega of America subsidiary, at $189 with a revised and limited launch occurring on the 14th of August 1989 In New York and Los Angeles.

Sega of America's staff members were quickly ramped up from a small team of 50 and Michael Katz was poached from Atari to come on board as president of Sega America. The TurboGrafx-16 would launch around the same time on the 29th of August 1989. Things were going to be close. In fact, Nintendo's president ***Hiroshi Yamauchi*** dismissed Sega being only a mere $700 million dollar company and was far more concerned with NEC's offering. He was investing a hefty amount into marketing, and had a whopping $3.7 billion R&D budget, more than Nintendo's annual sales. However, neither of them fully accounted for Sega's arcade experience, which was present from the get-go. Sega had learned from their Master System years about game bundling and included Altered Beast as the pack in game, a worthy conversion of their new coin-op. Nintendo's 8-bit console was still selling well, especially with Mario 3 on the loose. But an ever increasing thirst for an extended arcade quality experience in the home was becoming ever more present. Machines like the Amiga and Atari ST models could come close, but at a high outlay for the consumer. At $189 the Genesis was affordable being only twice the price at the NES. Yes, and it had true 16-bit power. The only problem was Sega needed some killer titles to convince the public to upgrade. Sega of Japan had made the pretty unpopular call to integrate region lockout to circumnavigate different release dates and prevent game importing. However, alongside Altered Beast, a number of reasonable titles and arcade conversions were made available throughout 1989 with the console itself in full distribution before the year was out. Nintendo still had quite a tight grip on the market, and their restrictive licencing deals were preventing some third-party publishers from joining the 16-bit show, causing continued issues for both Sega and NEC.

SEGA™

16-BIT
POWER ON
ON OFF
POWER
VOLUME
RESET
MEGA DRIVE SEGA





However, like Nintendo, Sega had adopted the licence the marketing model, meaning developers had to pay a royalty to publish on their machine. Some might describe this as ensuring only quality software houses published, others might call it just shameless money making which actually limited the amount of software for machines. Thankfully for Sega,

Trip Hawkins, founder of EA, had raised his head when the Mega Drive landed in Japan and imported one to EA labs. Their plan was to reverse engineer the hardware and work out a way of circumventing Sega's licencing costs. The Genesis software collection was starting to look substantial, and NEC's TurboGrafx-16 was trailing behind, partly due to the Japanese-oriented nature of its software library and further exacerbated by the rather obscure omission of a second controller port out of the box. Combined with the Genesis sound and graphics, the remaining console scene was starting to resemble children's toys, and the 16-bit console would rack up almost 500,000 sales in just over six months. But Sega wanted something big; Nakayama had set a goal of 1 million units before the year was out. Michael Katz had held the reins well, even with the "Genesis does what Nintendon't" advertising, which proved somewhat controversial to the company's Japanese board, as aggressive marketing was not part of the culture there. But still Sega of Japan wanted something fresh and invigorating to allowing Sega of America to have a very strong foothold.

This mid 1990s invigoration would come in the form of ***Tom Kalinske*** fresh out of Mattel, Tom realised there was still a large hill to climb against Nintendo's entertainment system and had observed that software support wasn't an essential part of it. After settling in, the first move was to lower the price to $149. The console was also revised about this time, one of many cost cutting occasions where Sega revised the hardware, including the removal of the rear serial port used in Japan for modem devices, which could make use of ***Meganet*** and online multiplayer service offering downloadable titles. Various PCB iterations were also rolled out. Have you ever noticed that the first Genesis and Mega Drive models have "***High Definition Graphics***" around the rim near the cartridge slot? Later models removed this and some of these suffered from sound degradation in titles on the Mega Drive.

As well as reducing the system price, he also removed the Altered Beast packet, which didn't really fit with the godly Genesis image and opted for a certain character. Sega had learned about company mascots the hard way, with Mario bolstering NES sales since 1985. Although Alex Kidd helped the Master System's cause, Sega of Japan felt the need for something new and fresh, something that would epitomise the speed of their new hardware. A company-wide contest was launched which included a design by ***Naoto Ohshima*** called "***Mr Needle Mouse***" sporting red sneakers and accompanied by an anime inspired egg. A tech demonstration was created by ***Yuji Naka***, showing a fast-moving ball careering through a winding tube, and when combined with Mr Needle Mouse, ***Sonic*** the astonishingly fast ***hedgehog*** was born. His colouring was changed the match the Sega logo and his shoes were matched to something Michael Jackson had worn around his waist. . Kalinske pushed Nakayama to have Sonic as a pack in title, upsetting the Japanese board, who felt their most impressive title should be making money rather than given away for free, but Tom was given free rein to do as he pleased. Sonic was launched on 23rd June 1991, as both a pack in game and a standalone cartridge. This was a good thing because whilst this was going on, two things happened.

The first was that the Sega Mega Drive would launch globally in 1990, landing in areas where the Master System had fared well, such as Australia distributed by ***Ozisoft***, and Brazil in the hands of ***Tech Toys***, as well as in the key area of Europe on the 30th of November 1990. Here it was distributed by ***Virgin Mastertronic***, who had successfully trumped NES with their Master System marketing. Perhaps more importantly than this, the Super Famicom had launched on the 21st of November 1990, but only in Japan at this point, and was poised to compete not only with the Mega Drive & PC Engine, but also Nintendo's existing 8-bit Famicom console.

However, unlike the Mega Drive, loyal Famicom owners were overwhelmingly keen to get hold of the new hardware with the next instalment of Mario and its initial shipment of 300,000 units sold within hours, leaving the Japanese government asking video game manufacturers to schedule future console releases at weekends to avoid disruption. As you can imagine, this sent shockwaves through the bones of Sega, who couldn't rival Nintendo

TECHNICAL SPECS

CPU:MOTOROLA 68000 16/32-BIT PROCESSOR @ 7.67 MHZ

CO-PROCESSOR: ZILOG Z80 8-BIT @ 3.58 MHZ

RAM: 64K WORK RAM (68000), 64K VIDEO RAM, 8K WORK RAM (Z80)

ROM: 2K BOOT ROM, MAXIMUM CARTRIDGE SIZE OF 16 MEGABITS WITHOUT BANK SWITCHING.

COLOURS:PALETTE OF 512 COLOURS WITH 64 (NORMAL) OR 183 (SHADOW/HIGHLIGHT MODE) ON SCREEN.

RESOLUTION:M256×448, 320×448, (PAL AND NTSC), 320×480 (PAL ONLY), 256×192 (SMS MODE ONLY)

SPRITES:80 (320-PIXEL WIDE DISPLAY) OR 64 (256-PIXEL WIDE DISPLAY)

SOUND:YAMAHA YM2612 5-CHANNEL FM & 1-CHANNEL FM/PCM, TEXAS INSTRUMENTS SN76489 4 CHANNEL PSG (PROGRAMMABLE SOUND GENERATOR)

ADD-ONS: MEGA CD, 32X, MASTER SYSTEM ADAPTER, LINK CABLE AND MODEM.

INPUT: JOYPAD, ARCADE STICK, LIGHT GUN, MOTION CONTROLLER, MULTI-TAP AND STEREO SPEAKERS (MODEL 1)

16-BIT
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE SEGA

despite their two year head start. But back in Europe and the States, things were still looking rosy, news of the Super Famicom had travelled fast, but not as fast as Sonic was powering across screens. Slotting and writing with Sega's continued advertising, pitching their machine as cool, even paying for late night advertising aimed at adults compared to Nintendo's almost childlike appeal. A Sony focus group found teenage boys would not admit to owning a Super NES over a Genesis. The Genesis continued to outsell the Super NES at a ratio of two to one. Christmas 1991 saw Sega outsell Nintendo for the first of four Christmas seasons in a row, holding a much larger library of games than the SNES and infinitely cooler than the NES. Sega would buy out Virgin Mastertronic this year, forming Sega's European presence for the first time. However, this would also be the year that the Super NES began to fight back.

Arcade classics like Capcom's Final Fight were released for it and was a somewhat cut down version of the game, but not before Sega had already launched the arguably better Streets of Rage. ***Blast Processing*** was the ingenious result of Sega's technical director **Marty Franz** discovering that you could pull some nifty tricks with scanline interrupts timings. Senior producer **Scott Bayless** mentioned this to the PR team, that you could just blast data into the DAC's, a reference to having a direct memory controller that could push data into the graphics processor at high speed and would put some impressive visuals on screen including 256 colour static images.
With 1992 drawing to a close and Blast Processing soon to be firmly cemented into playground banter, Sega could claim to hold an impressive 55% of the active video game market and for every Nintendo game in total, 1.4 Genesis titles were being sold. Sega were again eager to get one up on Nintendo, fearing their dominance may not last for long. But rather than a new console that fear would be realised in the form of the Sega Mega-CD. The main problem was the expensive price tag which many gamers just couldn't afford, or even justify based on the games available. Technology was starting to get cheaper and rather than spending more, many budget gamers were starting to enter the 16-bit market.

By 1993, Sega of America had 700 staff with $3.6 billion in gross salaries compared to just 35 staff and gross salaries of $813 million in 1989. Sega had come a long way, but also had a longer distance to fall. 1993 was also the year the ***Mega CD*** made it to Europe, but due to strange timing, was also the year a flatter, cheaper ***Mega CD 2*** arrived, This led to a strange situation where the Mega-CD hardware was price reduced quite rapidly within a few months, denting consumer confidence somewhat. The UK especially was the region where the Amiga CD32 was selling reasonably well and offering direct competition to the Mega-CD's market slowed Sega's penetration even further. The Mega Drive had sold some 30 million consoles worldwide at this point and given that Sega already dominated across most of Europe, our region hadn't seen the aggressive Sega marketing against Nintendo, and so the Super NES with its vast colour palette was turning heads at an ever increasing rate. The Super Nintendo would outsell the Mega Drive in most regions from 1995 through to 1997, with the Mega Drive officially discontinued worldwide in 1997.

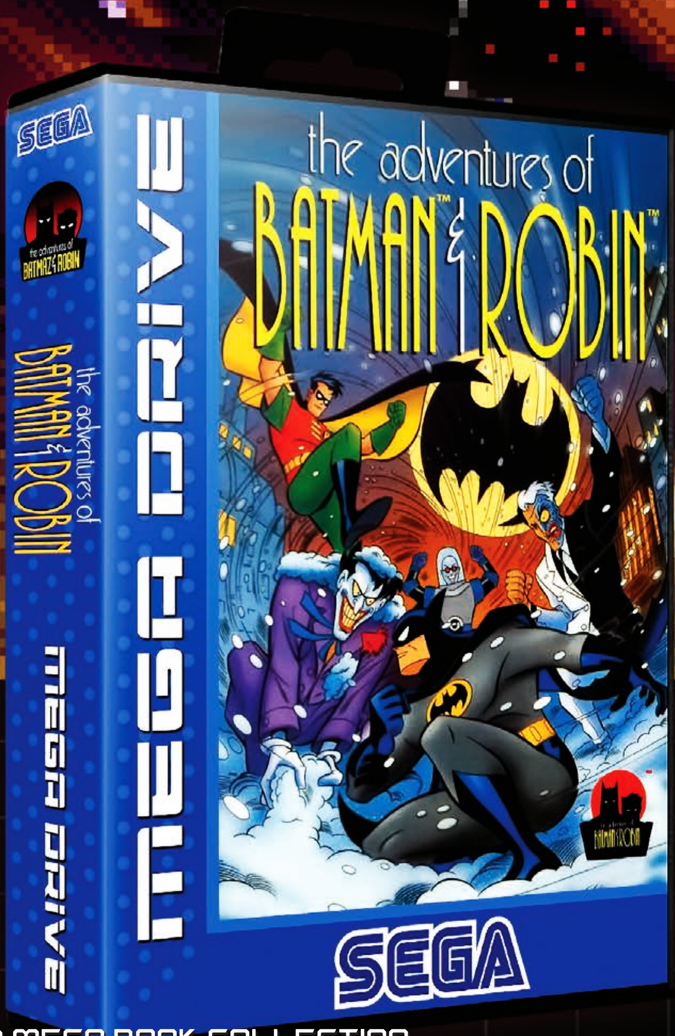
The Super Nintendo would hang on a little longer selling 49 million consoles worldwide, while the Mega Drive still stands at almost 40 million which is a pretty impressive figure in itself. Now one thing that Mega Drive touched on before most other consoles was online gaming. We briefly mentioned the Japanese Meganet which would also appear in Brazil in 1995. But North America also witnessed its own Sega Channel, launching in December 1994 and offering downloadable games amongst news and cheat codes for its users and lasted until July 1998. However, while it was quite expense, it was a clear forerunner for many services we take for granted nowadays. But Sega had unfortunately overreached themselves and just couldn't support their own products with the Sega Saturn, CDX/Multi-Mega, Sega CD, 32X, Genesis, Game Gear and another handheld the Sega Nomad at the same time, and many of these products were frowned upon by Sega of Japan, who preferred to concentrate on their main product. The Mega Drive, the Genesis, whatever you want to call it, is considered one of the best and most inspiring consoles ever produced. Its hardware and the games which ran on it stimulated a plethora of developers who would go on to great things for rival machines and future hardware right up to this very day. ■

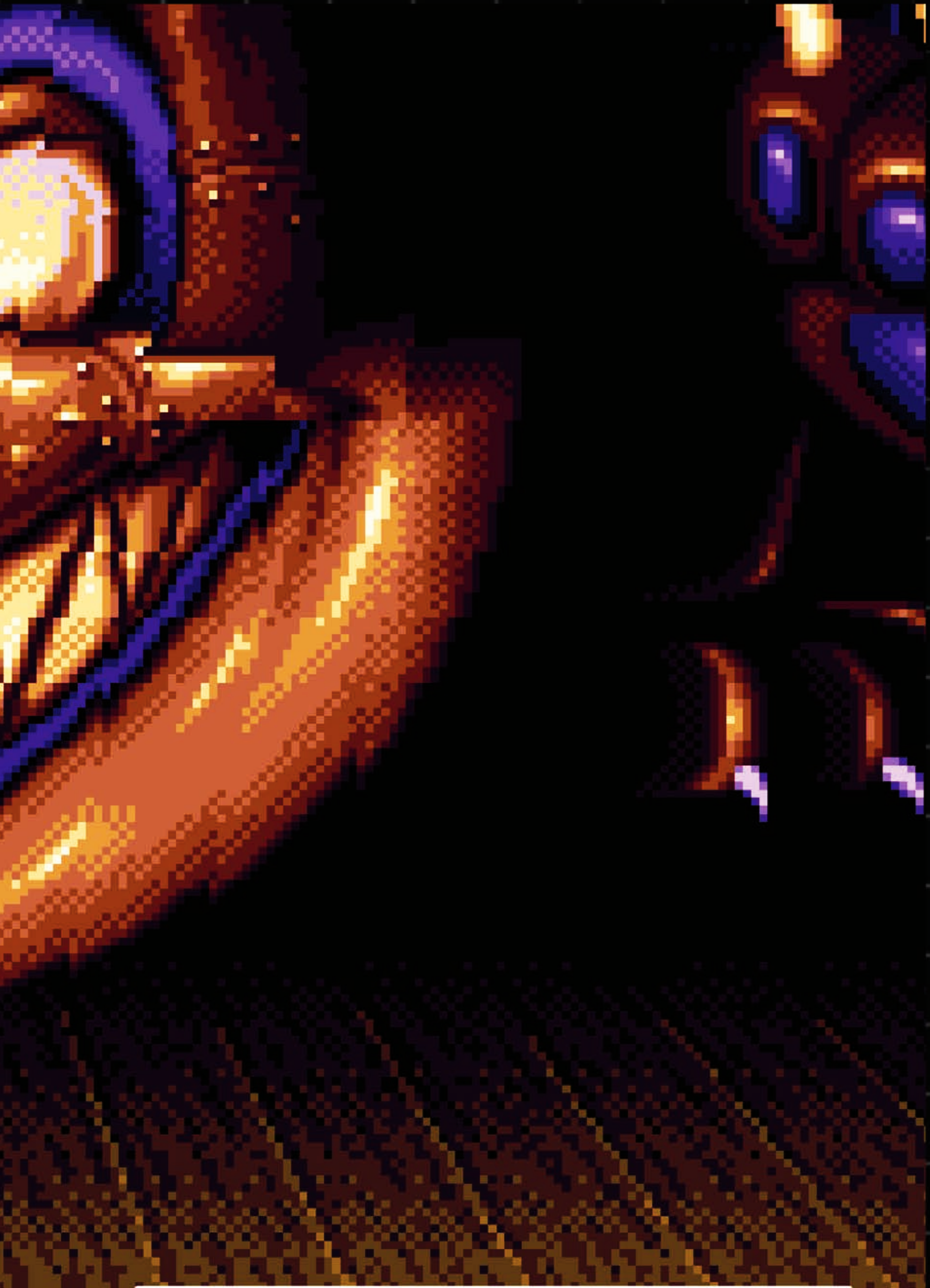
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
The ultimate computer game console
includes SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
16-BIT
SEGA

Mega Drive European Packaging

MEGA DRIVE
CASTLE OF ILLUSION STARRING MICKEY MOUSE
ECCO THE DOLPHIN
STREETS OF RAGE II
The Super SHINOBI
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

Mega Drive European & Japanese game box art


SEGA
the adventures of
BATMAN™ & ROBIN™
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA

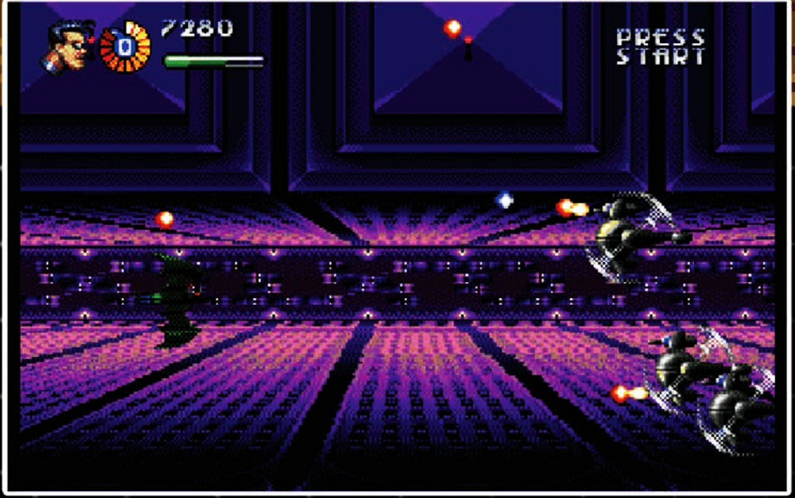


Adventures of Batman & Robin -

Batman: The Animated Series was an awesome cartoon show and it was only a matter of time before it would arrive to the home on your favourite Sega machine. The Adventures of Batman & Robin is one of them and the Super Nintendo version is very different than the versions for the Sega systems, which I think was a good choice as variety is the spice of life after all. So, what is the Adventures of Batman all about? You must stop four major villains – the Joker, Two-Face, Mad Hatter, and Mr. Freeze.

You can play as either Batman or Robin and the game plays out in levels with multiple stages or areas per level. Each level focuses on a specific villain and each stage ends with a boss battle. The plot is essentially inconsequential, and the game can be very difficult at times, although it is quite long which is always a good thing. I would recommend you pick it up but only if you're a masochist and enjoy run 'n' gun shooters and shmups. You need to enjoy dying repeatedly and replaying through many of the same stages over and over again. It's not really a bad game but it's not for everybody. In fact, you will feel like an actual hard-arse Batman after you've completed it and Gotham is safe once more.■

the adventures of
BATMAN & ROBIN
TM



Title:
Adventures of Batman & Robin, The

Genre:
Side Scrolling Super Hero Beat'em up

Developer:
Clockwork Tortoise Inc.

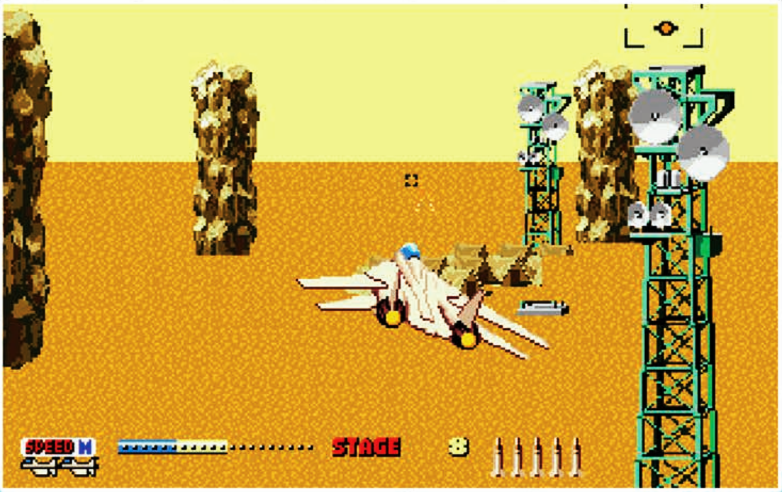
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
AFTER BURNER II
MEGA DRIVE
AFTER BURNER II
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

SCORE
6600
HIT
0

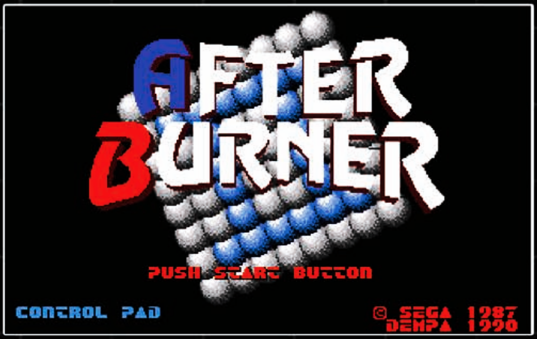
SPEED
STAGE
12



Afterburner 2 -

Flying a plane is pretty cool but piloting a fighter jet is even better. Following the success of the original After Burner, SEGA knew that they had a solid template. It could be improved, and the sequel did exactly that. Designed by Yu Suzuki after his work on Outrun, this title aimed to deliver players a greater sense of control over an F-14 Tomcat Fighter Jet. Unlike the first game, players could have full control over the throttle, speeding up and slowing the action on whim. The game also included synthesized speech to heighten the realism. The pilot yells “Fire!” before launching missiles.

Its 3D visuals were cutting edge for the time and being able to perform 360-degree rolls while still maintaining some convincing depth perception was amazing. Players must engage with numerous enemies over sea, sand and military bases. Combining fine-tuned throttle control and nimble movement allows incoming fire to be avoided letting players counter attack with lock-on missiles. Chaining together multiple hits on enemies boosts the score exponentially. It felt good in the arcades and it was just as good on the Megadrive. The sounds, sights and barrel-rolls all work together to make After Burner 2 a certified classic. ■



Title:
After Burner 2

Genre:
Arcade Air Combat Shoot’em Up

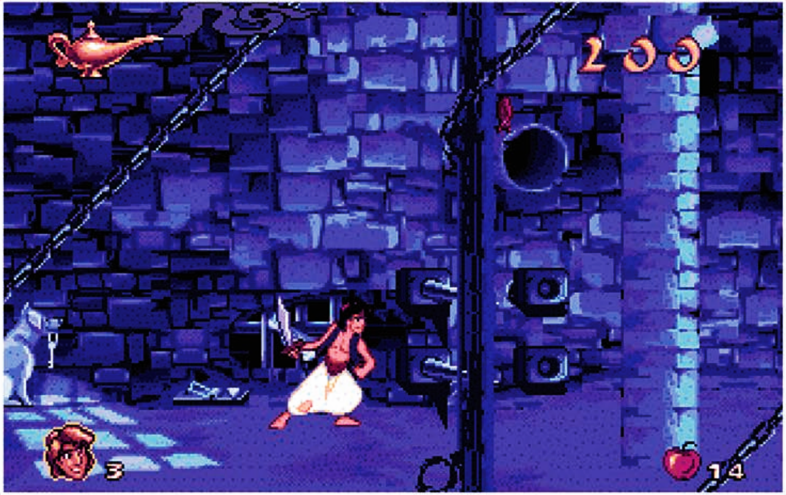
Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1990

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
Disney's Aladdin
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
Disney's Aladdin
Virgin
Disney

150
3
20



Aladdin -

16-bit games took a little imagination to look good. Not all sprite work is created equal, and it was hard for licensed games to adapt the source material. Virgin Interactive's Aladdin is a complete rejection of this idea though. They worked hand in hand with Disney animators to create a game with a visual fidelity that made the characters instantly recognizable. The soundtrack was brilliant too; players who like the movie will find the music to be a catchy approximation of the its tunes.

Aladdin is a platformer and plays through the same scenarios as shown in the movie. It takes a few liberties for the sake of gameplay, for example giving Aladdin a sword, but it works well. Getting to jump around the bombastic dreamlike dance number when the Genie is introduced is a stroke of genius! Of course, some of the game can be quite challenging. The flying carpet escape sequence is thrilling but hard to nail first try. Even with the difficulty spikes, Aladdin is consistently fun, and the presentation on display is more than good enough to persuade multiple playthroughs. The game is like lightning in a bottle, or more accurately, a genie in a lamp.

Disney's Aladdin
PRESS START
OPTIONS
(C) 1993 SEGA. (C) 1993 VIRGIN GAMES

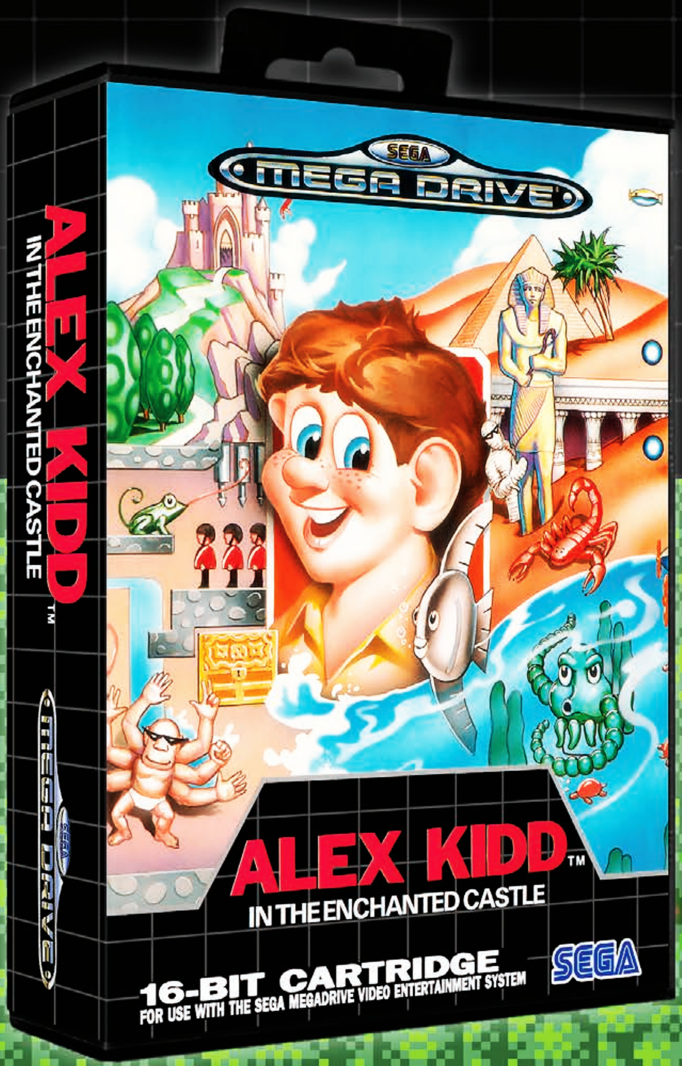
Title:
Aladdin

Genre:
Arcade Action Platform Title

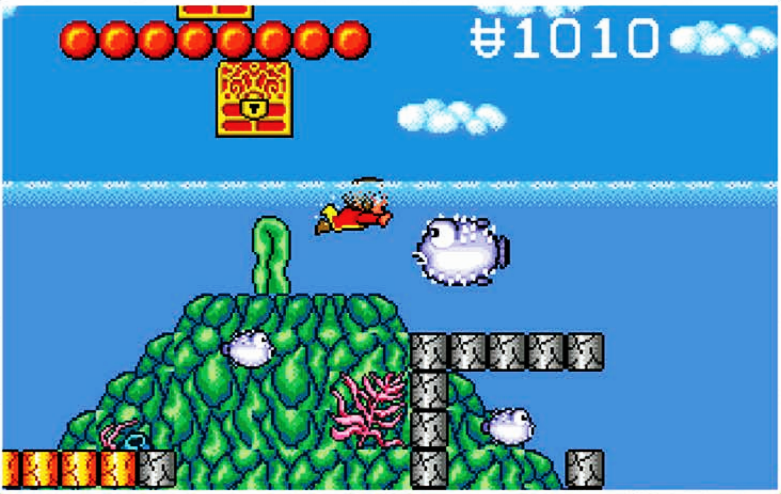
Developer:
Virgin Games, Inc.

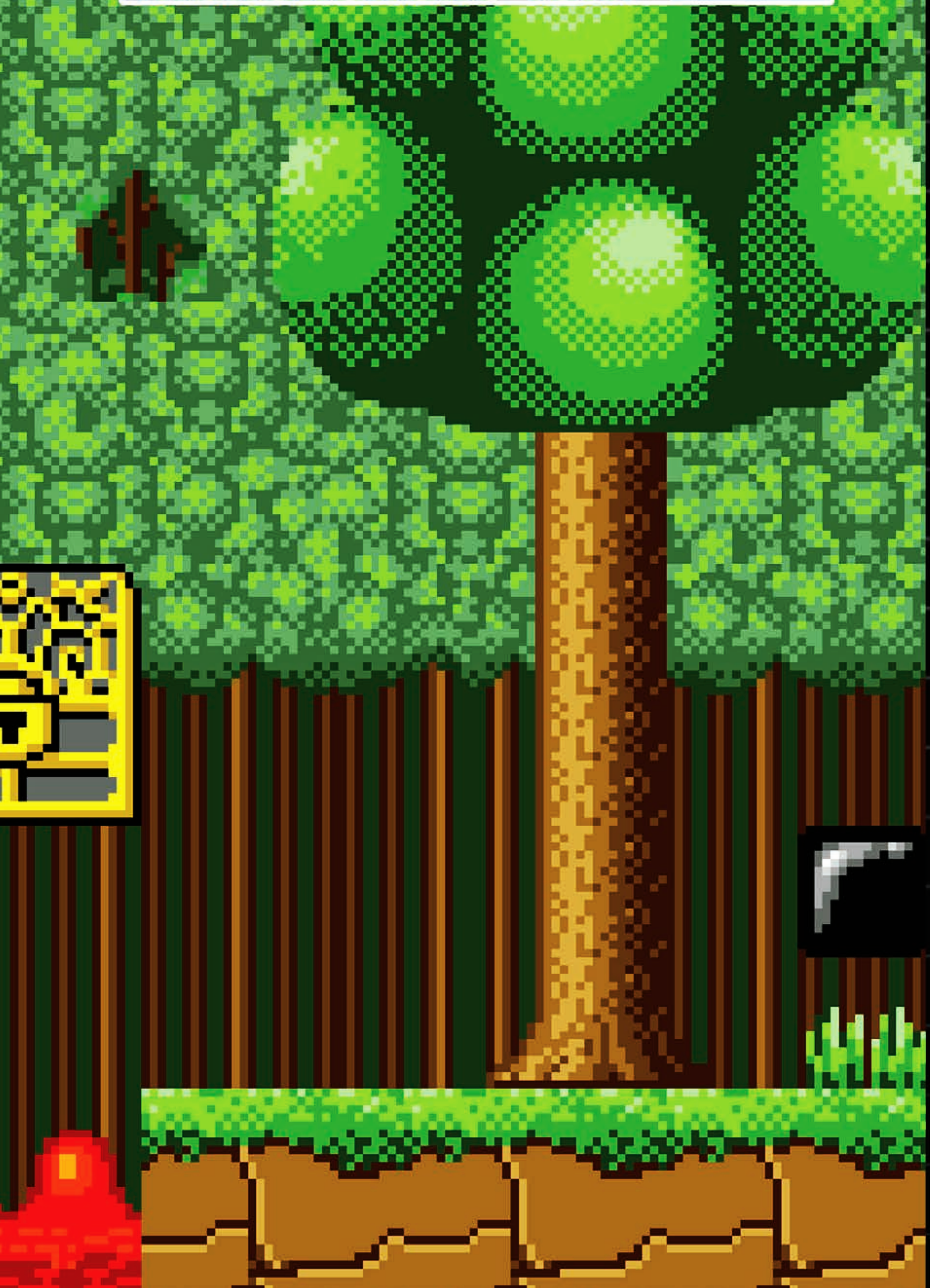
Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ALEX KIDD™
IN THE ENCHANTED CASTLE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

0





Alex Kidd -
In The Enchanted Castle

This would end up being Alex Kidd's only foray into the Mega drive. Remembered for his near mascot status on the Master System, he was quickly overshadowed by Sonic. In the Enchanted Castle, Alex plays similar to his other games in which you kick, punch and dodge enemies to collect coins as you traverse through levels playing rock-paper-scissors in exchange for items to use for help. This is an early entry in the Mega Drive library but even at that point, the graphics and soundtrack are sub-par. The level design is rather unpolished and the enemies lack any kind distinction. You're fighting wizards, cars, eagles and aeroplanes and they all feel somewhat out of place for a game claiming to be about an Enchanted Castle.

Alex has a very short attack range and can easily miss enemies. The punishment for this is instant death as Alex cannot take any damage without dying. Some of the areas in the game are quite densely populated, making the game quite punishing. This is a piece of history as it was released by Sega themselves, and Alex himself was a staple of the Master System but this is a title that slides right into the middle of the action-platformer genre. ■

ALEX KIDD
IN THE
ENCHANTED
CASTLE
PUSH START BUTTON
© SEGA 1989

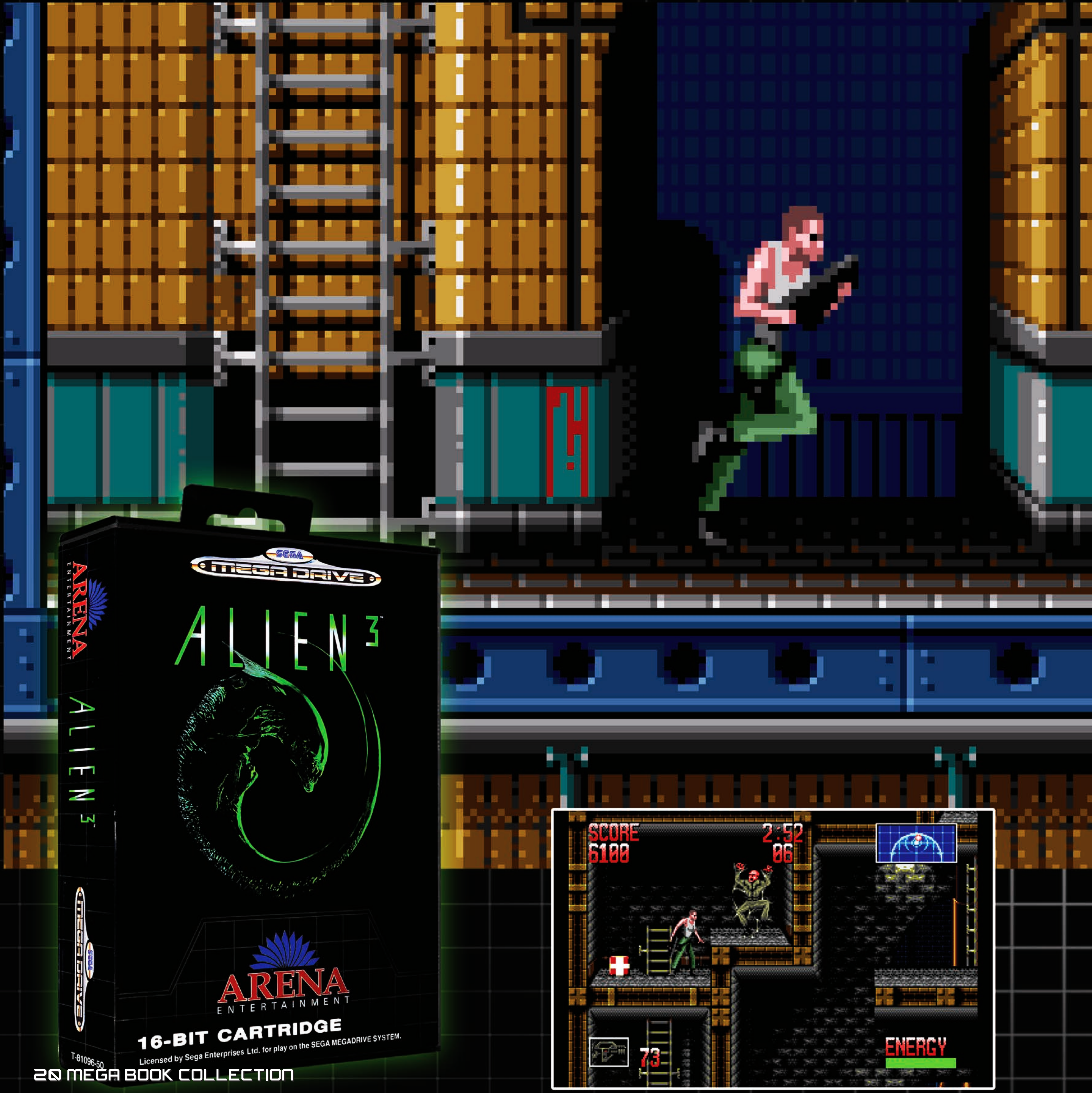
Title:
Alex Kidd: In the Enchanted Castle

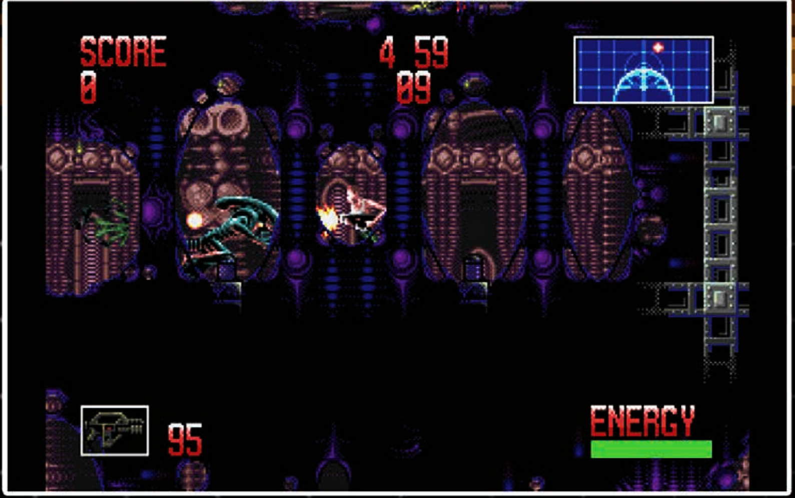
Genre:
Classic Arcade Side Scrolling Platformer

Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ALIEN 3
ARENA ENTERTAINMENT
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGADRIVE SYSTEM.
T-81096-50
SCORE
6100
2:52
06
ENERGY
73



Alien 3 -

In 1992, the third instalment in the Aliens saga was released and, with it, came games derived from the film. The Genesis/ Mega Drive, of course, got its own version of the game. Ripley sets out to stop “The Company” from gaining access to the alien life forms, and have now begun growing in numbers and taking captives. It is up to Ripley to rescue the captives and destroy the aliens.

As the player you take on the role of Ripley and you must traverse various platforms as you search for captives while killing every alien that gets in your way. You have four weapons you can use: machine gun, flame thrower, grenade launcher, and hand grenades. All of these are in limited supply so you must be sure to collect ammunition as you travel about. Time is of the essence and you must focus on finding the captives so you can make it to the exit before the clock reaches zero. Aliens 3 has colourful graphics with well animated characters and good sound effects. The music is pretty upbeat and gives the game more of an arcade feel than anything else. The game can be challenging as the aliens do move about rather quickly, but it is still a fun game, one that should be enjoyed by lovers of running shooters and Alien fans alike. ■

ALIEN3
START
OPTIONS

Title:
Alien 3

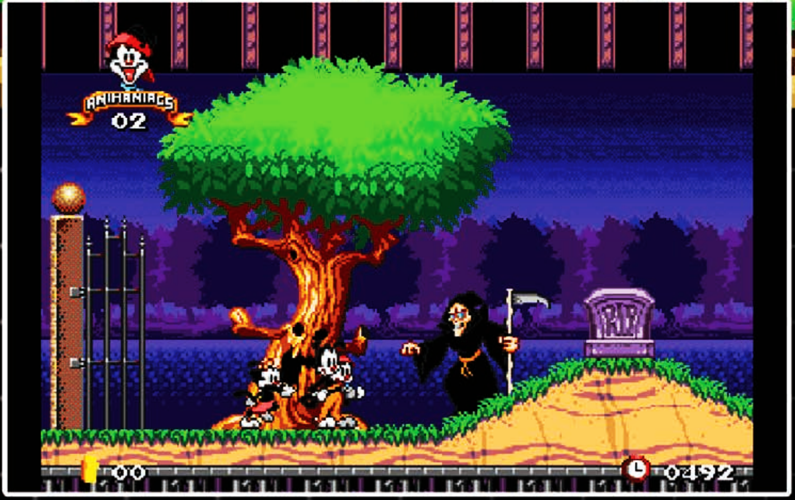
Genre:
Action Gun’n’Run Movie-Tie-in Title

Developer:
Probe Software

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Arena Entertainment

ANIMANIACS
02
KONAMI
MEGA DRIVE
KONAMI
Animaniacs
MEGA DRIVE
ANIMANIACS
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM.
ANIMANIACS
02
PSYCHIATRY



Animaniacs -

Animaniacs was a TV show developed by collaboration between Warner Bros. and Amblin Entertainments (Steven Spielberg) that first aired in 1993. The show had a cast of wacky characters and it was considered a variety show that did anything from education to satire. The show's success led to the development of video games for various systems, including the Genesis/MD. This version of the game has Yakko, Wakko, and Dot (the Warner Siblings) opening up a hip pop culture shop so they can meet some of their favourite stars.

The Siblings travel through the different movie sets at Warner Brothers to pick up movie memorabilia but find themselves having to deal with Pinky and the Brain who want to use the items for their world domination plans. In the game, the player controls the Siblings as they travel through four different areas in the lot. Though all the characters move together, the player can only use one at a time for any particular action. Each Sibling has its own skillset: Yakko uses a paddleball to stun enemies and he has the ability to push/pull objects, Wakko has a mallet that can be used to break stuff or turn switches, and Dot blows kisses. Animaniacs is a nice mix of puzzle and platformer gaming that boasts colourful graphics and fun game play. ■

ANIMANIACS
START
PASSWORD
OPTIONS

Title:
Animaniacs

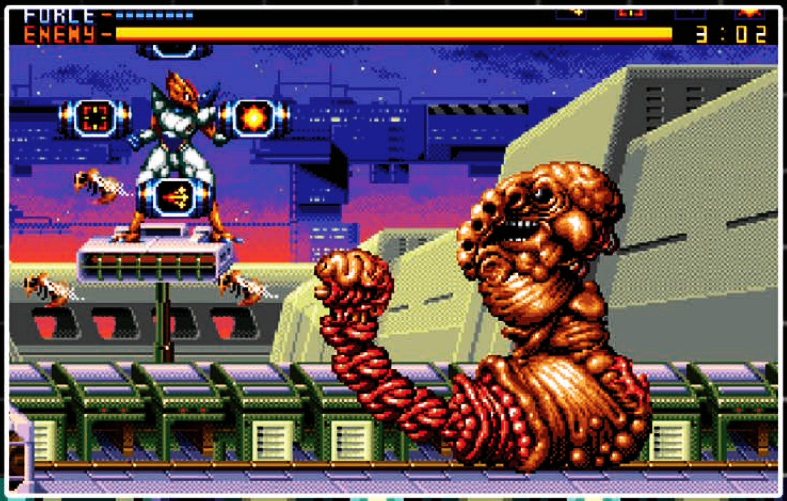
Genre:
Iconic Cartoon Action Platformer

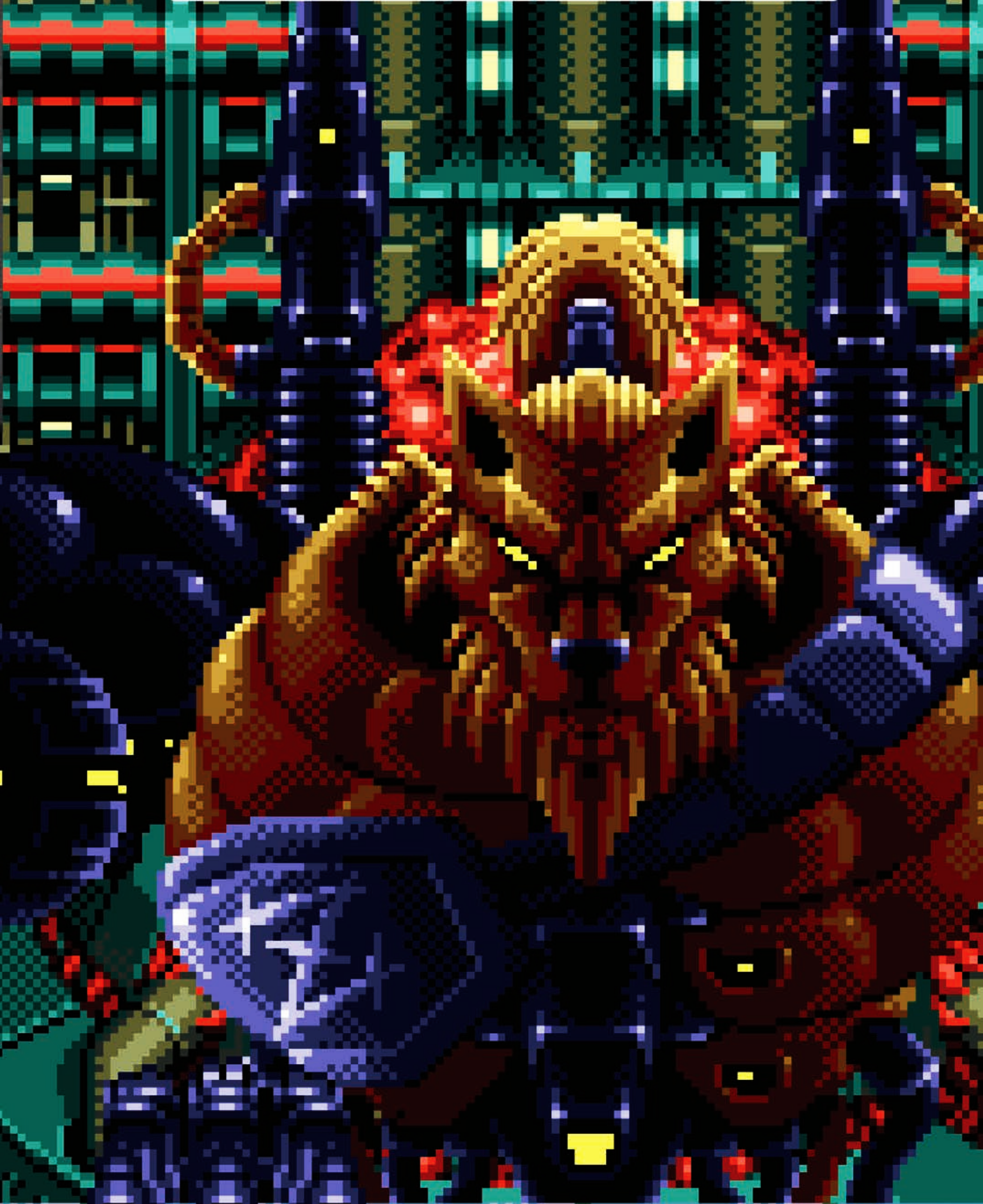
Developer:
Konami.

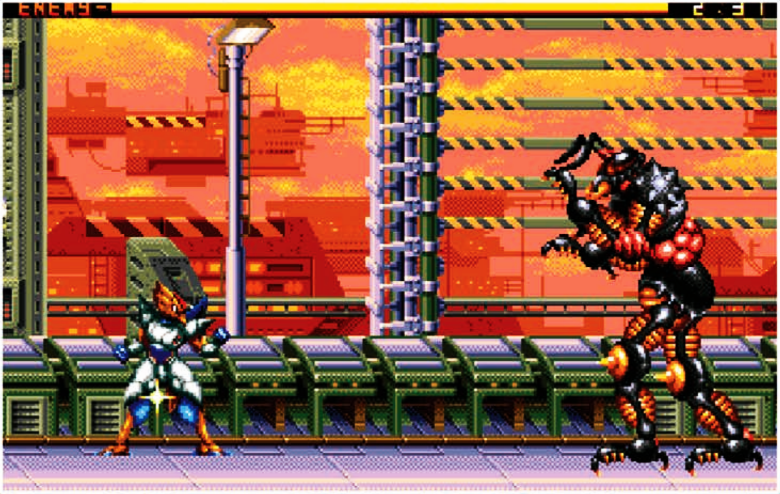
Year Released:
1994

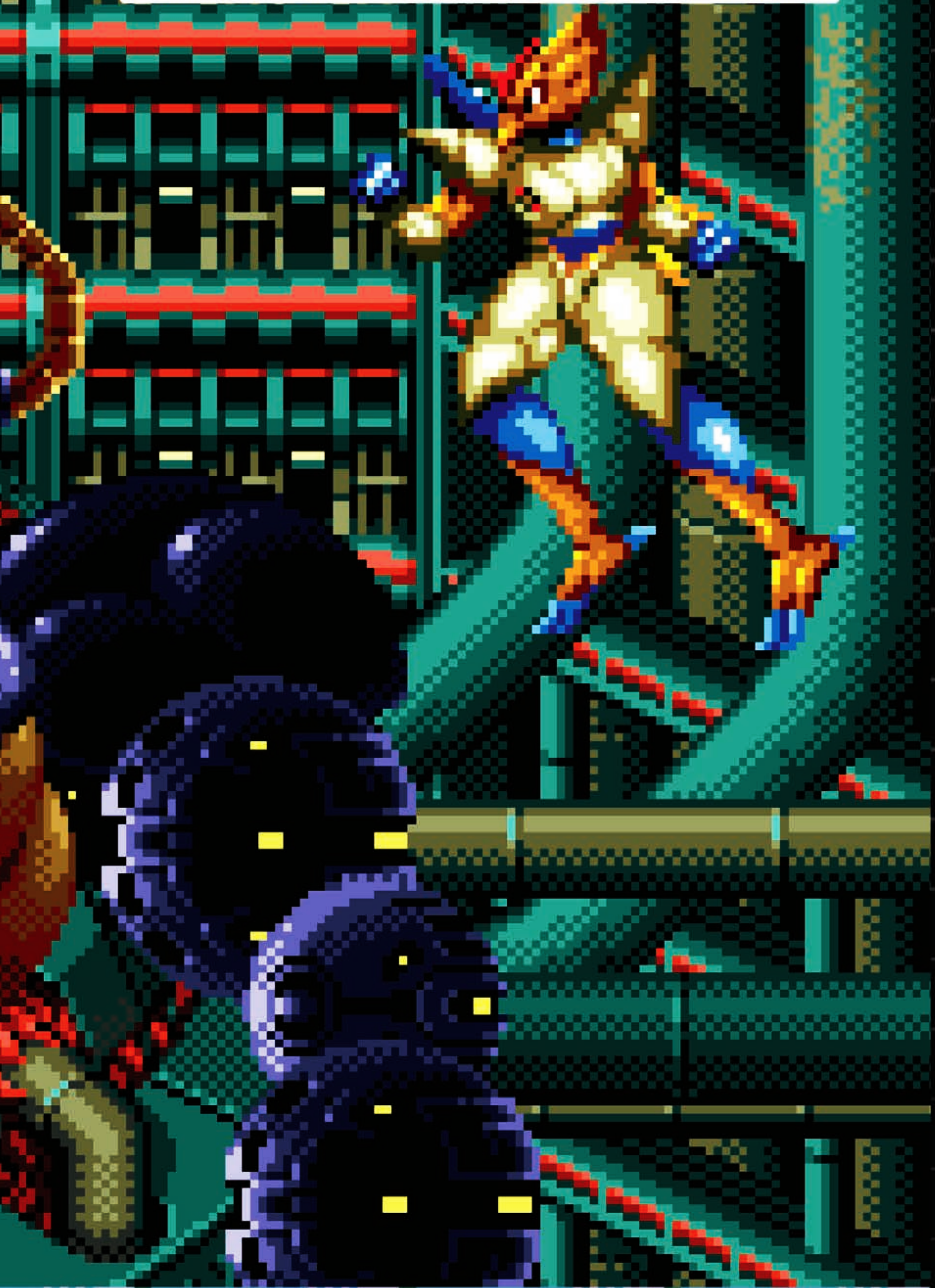
Publisher:
Konami

SEGA
ALIEN SOLDIER
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA


FORCE
ENEMY
3:02







Alien Soldier -

The planet Sierra, once peaceful, is now under attack by the terrorist group known as Scarlet. Scarlet only has one purpose, the destruction of the planet's human population and the total takeover of the world. After an assassination attempt on Epsilon-Eagle, Scarlet's former leader, Epsilon was badly injured and hurled into the space-time continuum where he has been hiding in the body of a boy. In the meantime, Scarlet is now under control of the feral Xi-Tiger, a leader so vicious that even Scarlet's members fear him making them seek out Epsilon.

Alien Soldier is a side scrolling shooter that has the unique honour of holding the Guinness World Record as the game with the most boss battles for a game of its kind. Each level of play is rather short and is followed by a boss fight with the game having a total of 31 bosses in 25 levels of play. There are two skill levels of play to choose from, Easy and Hard where the difference is that you have no saves (passwords) in the hard level. Alien Soldier is a rather good shooter for the Genesis/MD. The game has large character sprites, cool music, and nice sound effects. The bosses are announced with an alarm and these come in all shapes and forms. Though not an easy game to find, it is one I recommend you add to your library. ■

ALIEN SOLDIER
TM
FOR MEGADRIVERS CUSTOM
PASSWORD
GAME START
OPTIONS
©SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. 1995

Title:
Streets of Rage 2

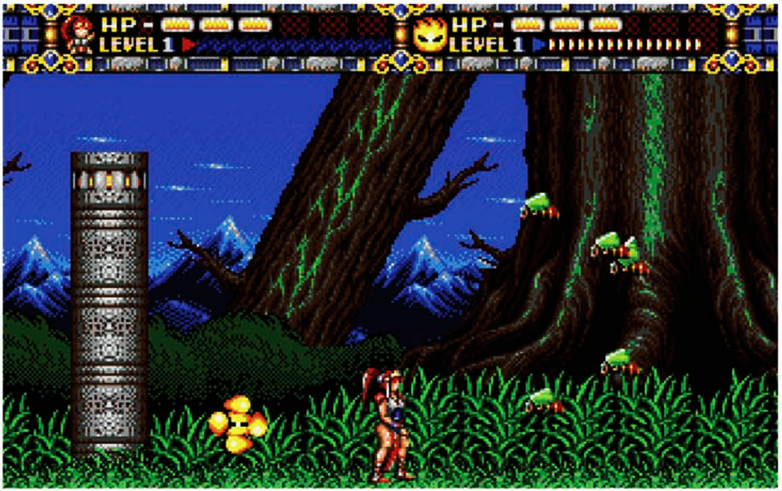
Genre:
Scrolling Beat'em Up

Developer:
Sega (AM7)

Year Released:
1992 - 1993

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ALISIA DRAGOON
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
HP
LEVEL2
HP
LEVEL3



Alisia Dragoon -

Alisia Dragoon is a fantasy action game with RPG elements released exclusively for the SEGA Megadrive in 1992. It bucked the trend of rescuing damsels in distress and instead had players assuming the role of Alisia. She is a powerful sorceress on a quest to avenge her late father and save the world. It's very gripping stuff. Players don't just have access to Alisia's destructive magic. They are accompanied by four loyal beasts, each with different abilities, to assist in combat throughout the journey. These creatures can be selected at any time, changing the flow of the action whenever the player chooses. The more a creature is used, the more it levels up, making the player's favoured approach even more powerful.

While enemies are frequent, the game encourages players to remain patient when fighting them. A bar at the top of the screen shows how powerful Alisia's lightning attacks are, and they decrease in power the more they are used. This makes players wait to deal extended damage, and synergy with the select companion creature is made all the more important. The tactical action combined with a fully realized story leads Alisia Dragoon to be a very compelling experience. ■

ALISIA TM
DRAGOON
START
OPTIONS
© 1992 GAME ARTS

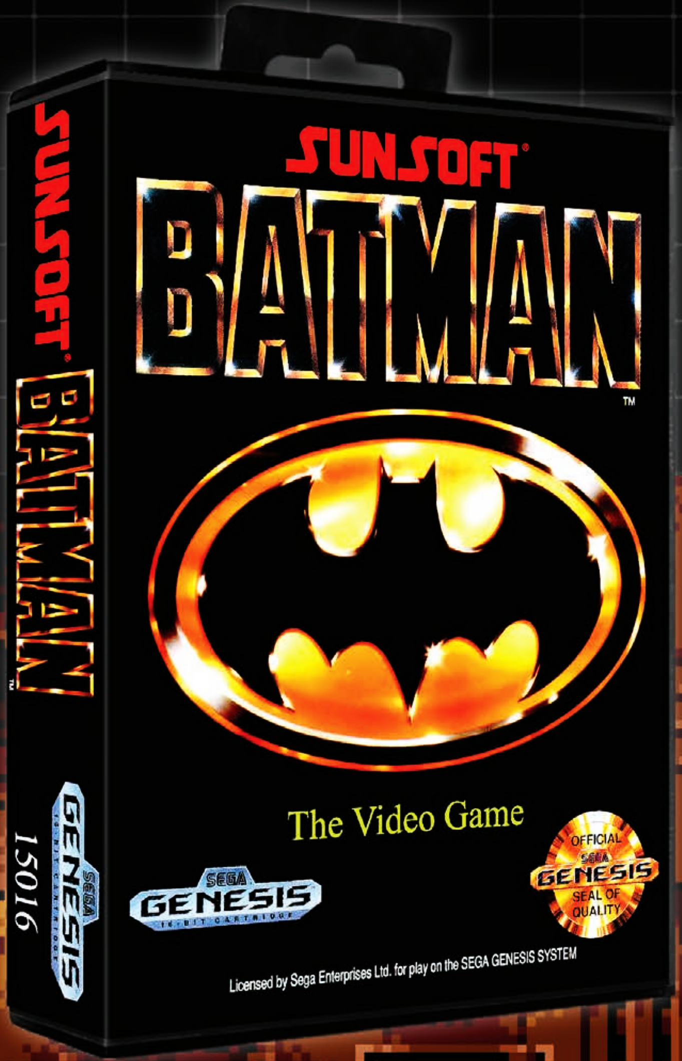
Title:
Alisia Dragoon

Genre:
Arcade Action RPG Platform Title

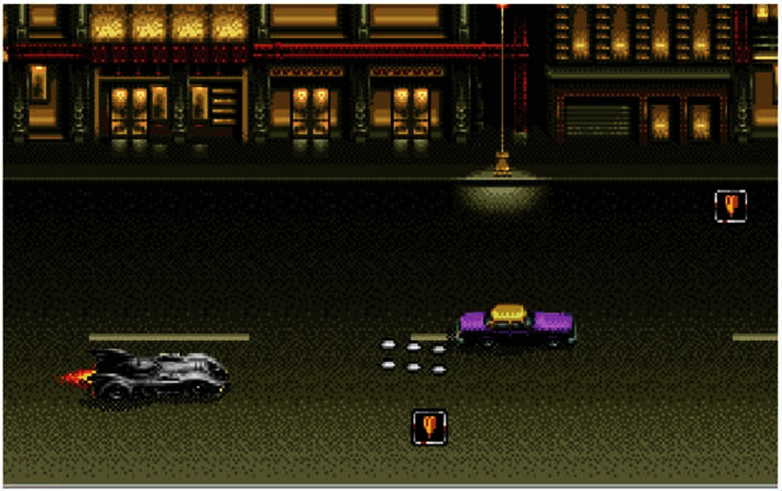
Developer:
Game Arts Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.


SUNSOFT
BATMAN
The Video Game
SEGA GENESIS
OFFICIAL SEGA GENESIS SEAL OF QUALITY
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA GENESIS SYSTEM
15016

WEISSMAN
00000600
E
6
5



SEGA GENESIS

Batman: The Video Game -

Batman for the Mega Drive, created by Sunsoft, is a fantastic title. When you first play Batman, you can tell it's an early title for the machine as it has all the usual gaming flaws: it's fairly easy, short and somewhat shallow in game play, and has what could be considered impressive graphics at the time. However, it also has unforgettable and excellent music. The game is more or less a straight up adaptation of the movie into late 80s/very early 90s game form. The only level that doesn't really follow the movie is the first level where you start out on the streets, and you fight assailants in the rain.

This game is an action platformer: you punch guys, you jump, you can use your grappling hook and throw batarangs. Gameplay is broken up by two vehicular levels: one with the Bat Mobile, the other the Bat Wing. The music in this game is actually some of the best 16-bit music I've ever heard from a Mega Drive. The game comes up short in the replay department for me, but if you are a Batman fan then this will be right up your alley, especially if you're a fan of Tim Burton's movie. Some great graphics and music but let down due to gameplay simplicity. ■

BATMAN™

PUSH START BUTTON

©1990 SUNSOFT®

TM & ©1989 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Title:
Batman: The Video Game

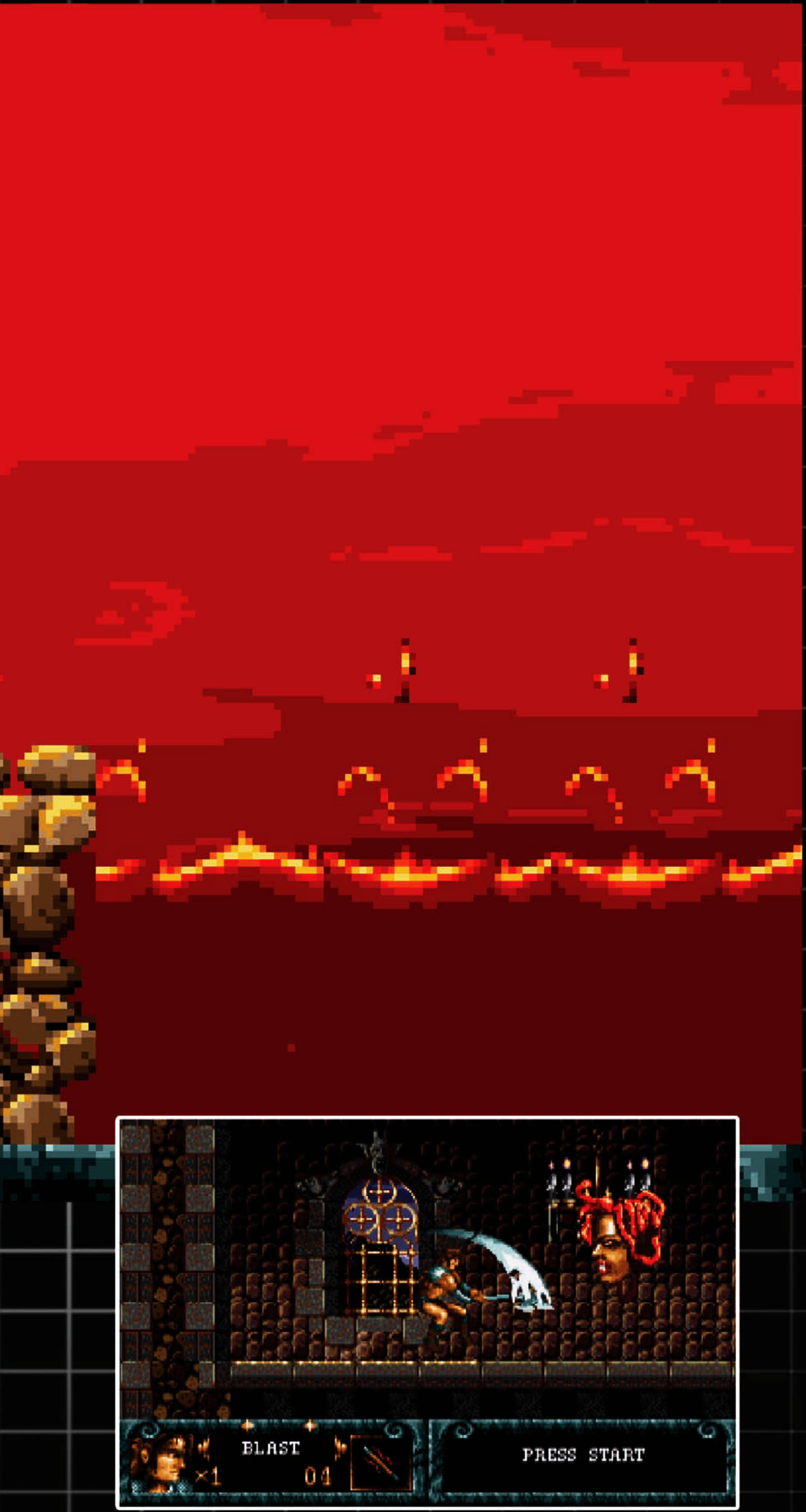
Genre:
Movie-Tie-In Action Platform Title

Developer:
Sunsoft

Year Released:
1990

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
BLADES OF VENGEANCE
ELECTRONIC ARTS
By Beam Software Pty Ltd.
ELECTRONIC ARTS
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the Sega Mega Drive System.
For play on Sega Mega Drive System
HEALING
×2
06
PRESS START



Blades of Vegeance -

You have to wonder sometimes where the inspiration for games comes from. In Blades of Vengeance, you can pay as either a Wizard, Huntress (read Valkyrie), or Barbarian (read Warrior). Sound familiar? Only the Elf is missing. Despite having characters similar to those from Gauntlet, Blades is a totally different game. The Kingdom has been conquered by Mannax the Dark Lady and The Master has summoned three distinct adventurers to defeat Mannax and her cronies. Navigating through eight levels full of wonders, treasures, monsters, and magic, you guide one of these characters on their mission.

At the start of every mission, The Master will give you some clues as to what to expect but that's all the help you'll get from him. Complete a level to be confronted by one of the Dark Lady's master creatures. Blades of Vengeance is a superb game, the graphics are beautiful with large character sprites that are nicely animated and well detailed and there are plenty of evil characters to fight against, including werewolves, gargoyles, skeletons, vampires, and fire creatures. The game has a "shop" where you can buy power ups for your character using the silver you collect through the levels. The game has fantastic music and even includes a two-player cooperative mode. This game is a winner and a must-have! ■

Blades of Vengeance
✦One Player
Two Players

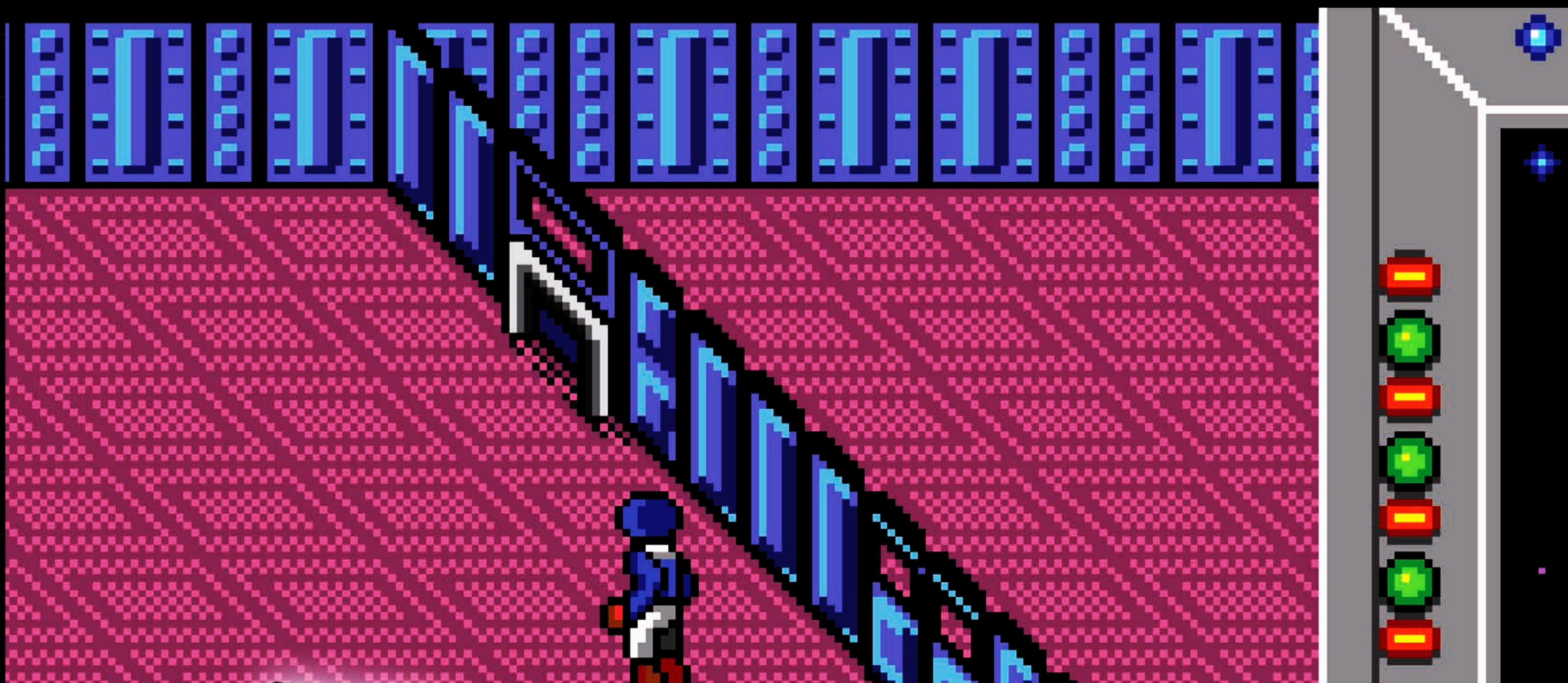
Title:
Blades of Vegeance

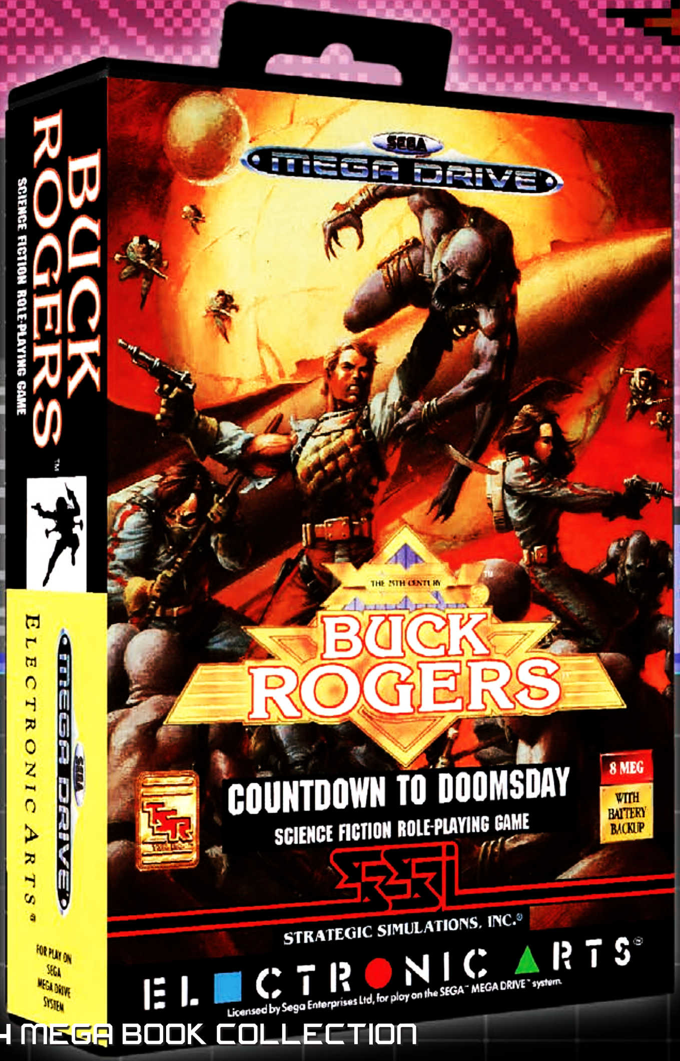
Genre:
Action Adventure Hack'n'Slash Title

Developer:
Beam Software

Year Released:
1993

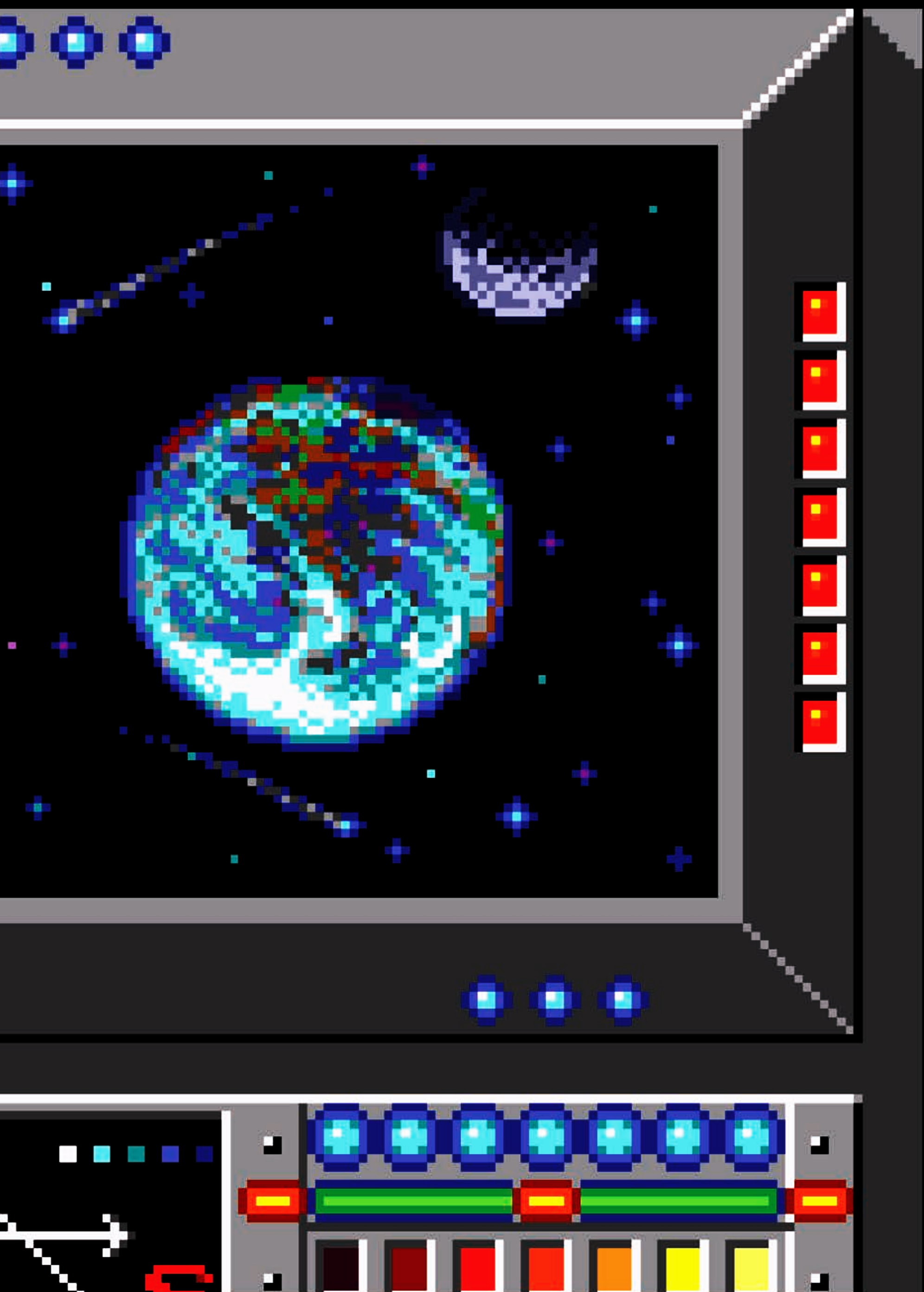
Publisher:
Electronic Arts, Inc.




SEGA MEGA DRIVE
BUCK ROGERS
SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING GAME
THE 25TH CENTURY
BUCK ROGERS
COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY
SCIENCE FICTION ROLE-PLAYING GAME
8 MEG
WITH BATTERY BACKUP
TSR
SSI
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.
ELECTRONIC ARTS
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd, for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE system.
FOR PLAY ON SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM

'I'M CAPTAIN ROGERS. YOU CAN CALL ME BUCK. I SAW YOU WERE IN TROUBLE SO I SNUCK ABOARD TO HELP OUT.

PRESS C TO CONTINUE

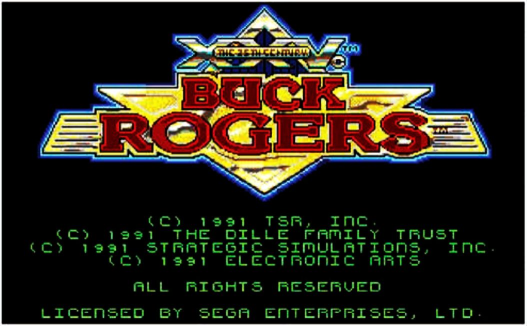


Buck Rogers:

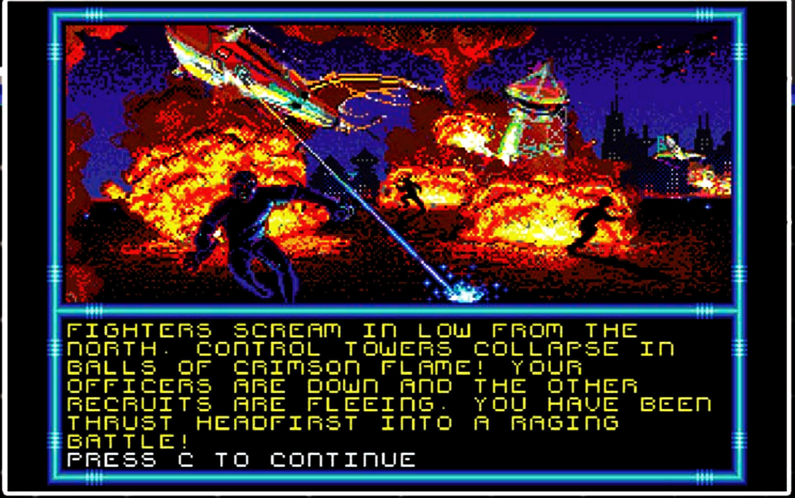
Countdown to Doomsday-

Affter centuries of war against RAM (Russo-American Mercantile) the NEO (New Earth Organization), with the help of Buck Rogers himself, have taken control of Earth and restored some peace to the war-torn civilization. However, RAM has not taken defeat well and are desperate to take back control of Earth. With a carefully chosen small crew of varied skills, the player is thrown in at the deep end to face combat missions, explore strange new planets and destroy the ultimate Doomsday weapon.

While the original PC version of this strategy RPG may be a bit heavy on the details, the Mega Drive port is refreshingly streamlined and includes an introduction tutorial level to get the player up to speed on the game's plot and gameplay. The game transitions from the main space map viewpoint to the many planet or space station based missions and quests. The player will take part in space ship dogfights and planet based battles that are executed in turn based tactical gameplay. This is an epic strategy role-playing game based on the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons games. Due to importing the original game, visuals may not be as impressive as they could have been, but it is the involving plot and gameplay that shines here. ■



(C) 1991 TSR, INC.
(C) 1991 THE DILLE FAMILY TRUST
(C) 1991 STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.
(C) 1991 ELECTRONIC ARTS
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.



FIGHTERS SCREAM IN LOW FROM THE NORTH. CONTROL TOWERS COLLAPSE IN BALLS OF CRIMSON FLAME! YOUR OFFICERS ARE DOWN AND THE OTHER RECRUITS ARE FLEEING. YOU HAVE BEEN THRUST HEADFIRST INTO A RAGING BATTLE!
PRESS C TO CONTINUE

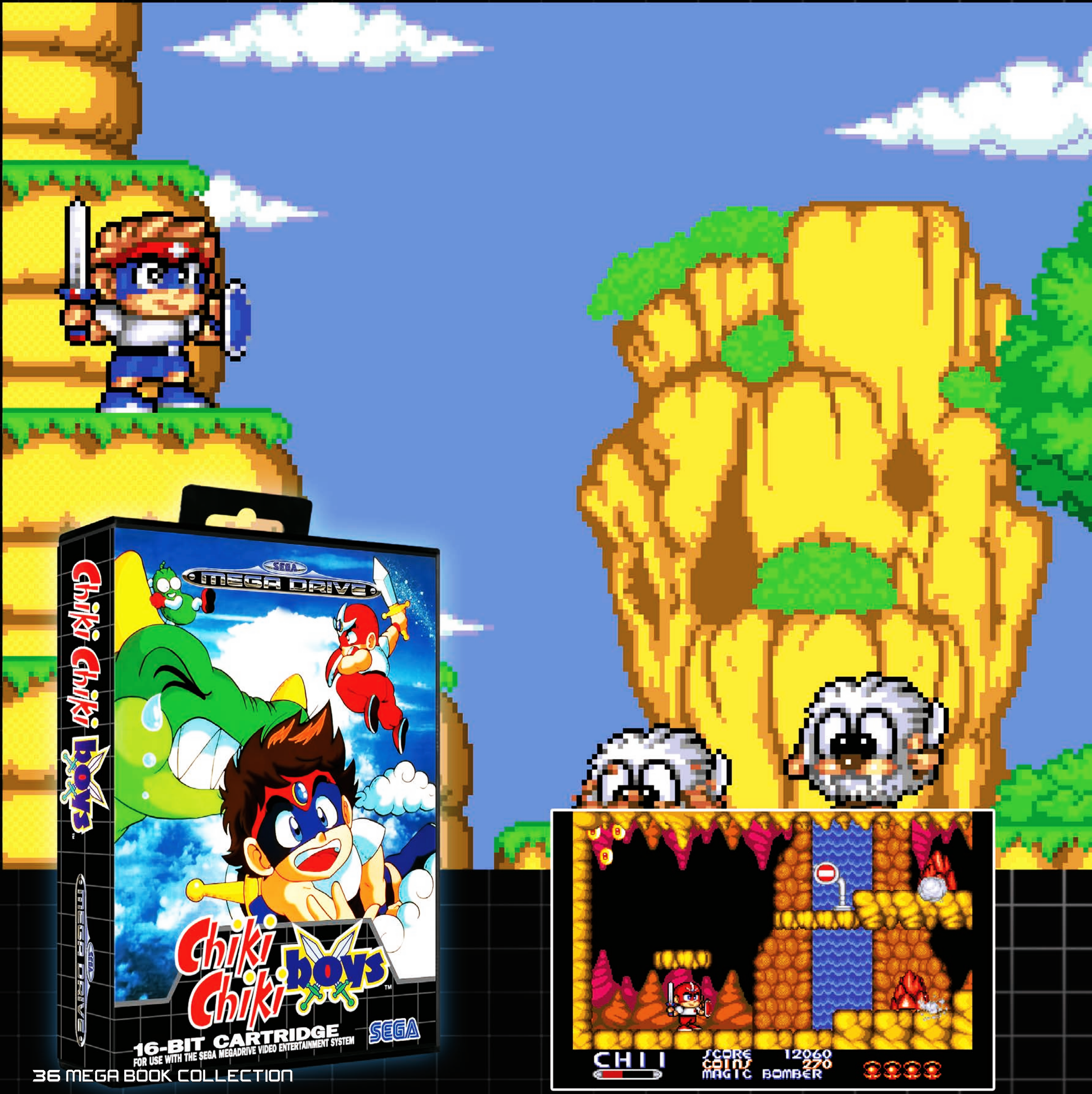
Title:
Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday

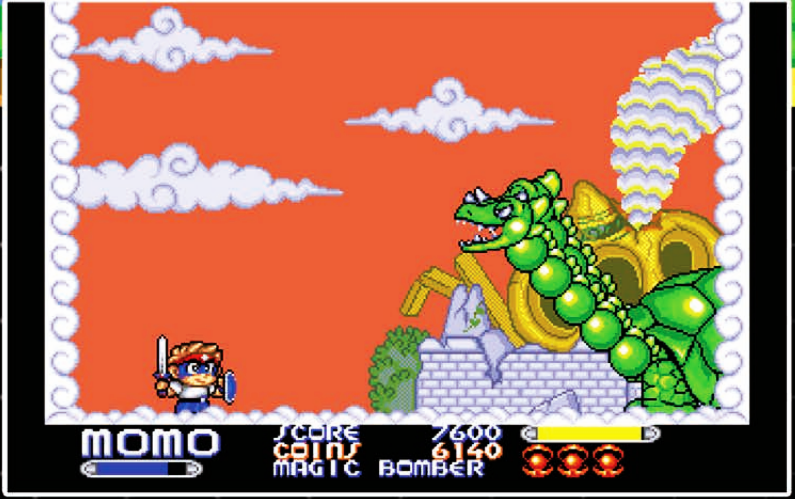
Genre:
Sci-Fi Role-Playing (RPG)

Developer:
Strategic Simulations, Inc.

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Electronic Arts, Inc.


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
Chiki Chiki boys
Chiki Chiki boys
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
CHII
SCORE 12060
COINS 270
MAGIC BOMBER



Chiki Chiki Boys -

The Mega Drive had a stellar line-up in 1993 and I'm sure most would have rather played the like of Streets of Rage 2, Shinobi III, Rocket Knight Adventures or Gunstar Heroes than a no name sensation. Never judge a book by its cover. A chance rental changed my mind about Chiki Chiki Boys completely. Often underrated and with a low profile, Chiki Chiki Boys is a hidden gem in the Mega Drive library like Blades of Vengeance. Don't pass this one up. The peaceful land of Alurea is attacked by monsters and its population decimated. The only survivors are the twin sons of the King who grow up ignorant of their homeland. When they are finally told of what happened to their kingdom the brothers set out to rid Alurea of evil. Released in the arcade under the name Mega Twins this was not one of Capcom's higher profile releases at the time.

The range of colours has taken a hit, but the biggest change comes in the backgrounds and a large portion of the environmental detail has either been cut or made smaller. But I can say that Chiki Chiki Boys on the Mega Drive is a great arcade port and an excellent action game. Sega have done a great job porting the arcade game and while it is often forgotten that doesn't make it any less great. This is the definition of a hidden gem and with its price is worth tracking down. ■

Chiki Chiki BOYS
TM
© CAPCOM 1990
REPROGRAMMED GAME © 1993 SEGA

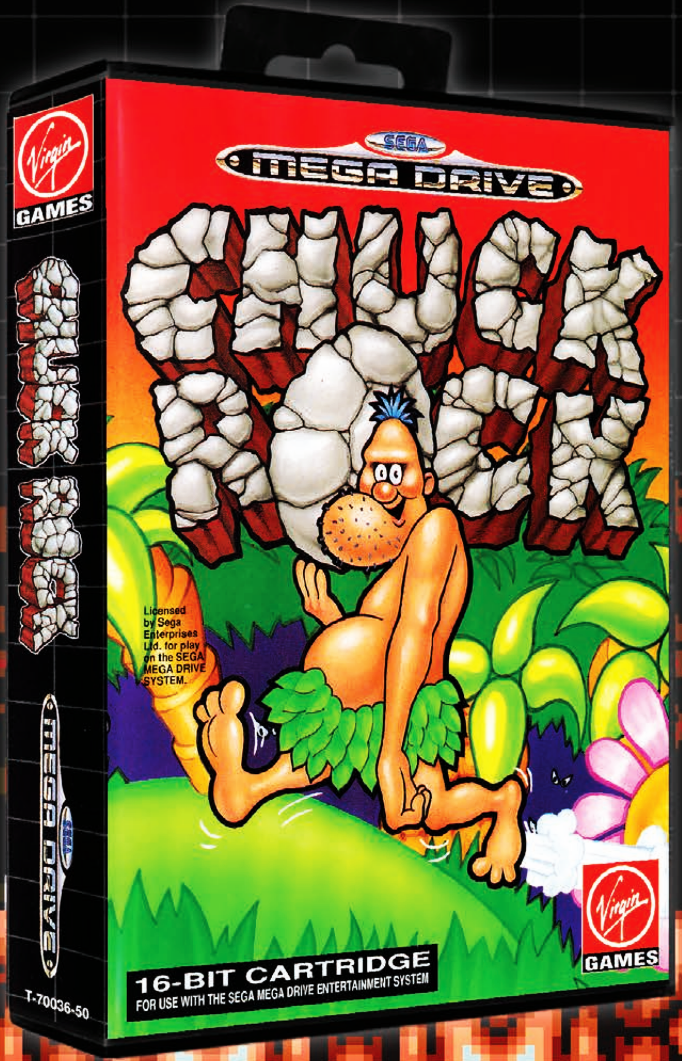
Title:
Chiki Chiki Boys a.k.a. Mega Twins

Genre:
Arcade Fantasy Platform Title

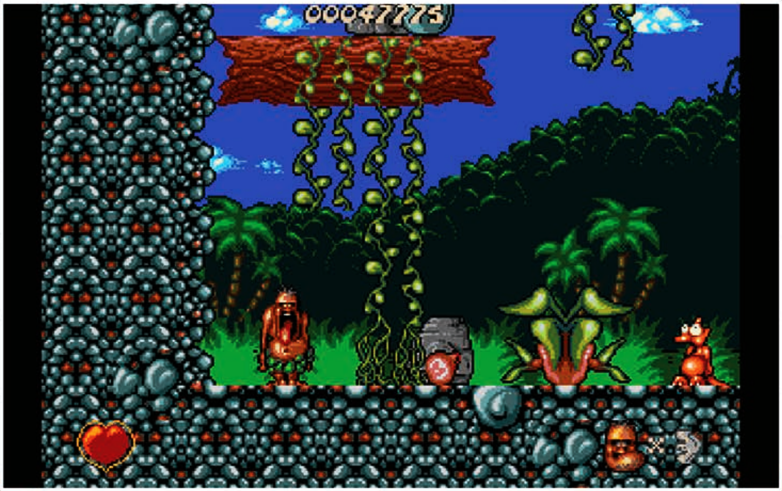
Developer:
Capcom

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
CHUCK ROCK
Virgin GAMES
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM.
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
T-70036-50

00018450



SEGA
MEGA DRIVE

Chuck Rock -

Chuck Rock was first released by Core Design in 1991 to home computers, with the folks at Virgin creating the Genesis/Mega Drive version. The game is set in a prehistoric Earth similar to that of the Flintstones and our unlikely hero is a fat, square-jawed man with a beer belly. This is Chuck Rock, who also has his own catch phrase, Unga Bunga! Chuck is married to Ophelia but Ophelia always had an admirer in the evil Gary Gritter. While Ophelia was hanging the laundry (with Chuck watching TV and drinking beer), Gary uses his club to knock out Ophelia and take her away.

It is up to Chuck to save his wife from this evil dude. With his clothes dirty, Chuck runs behind a bush and creates a leaf and twig set of pants and he sets off to the rescue. Chuck must cross five different areas in order to reach the dinosaur graveyard where Gary is holding Ophelia hostage. Chuck uses his belly to do a belly-butt but he is pretty good at jumping and throwing rocks at his enemies. The game has some really nice cartoon-like graphics and a catchy tune. To keep Chuck going (be sure to watch the heart meter), you need to find dinosaur steaks through the levels for him to eat and there are some puzzles you need to solve to advance through certain levels. This is a really nice title you should not miss! ■

CHUCK
ROCK
CORE
PRESS START
LICENSED BY
SEGA ENTERPRISES

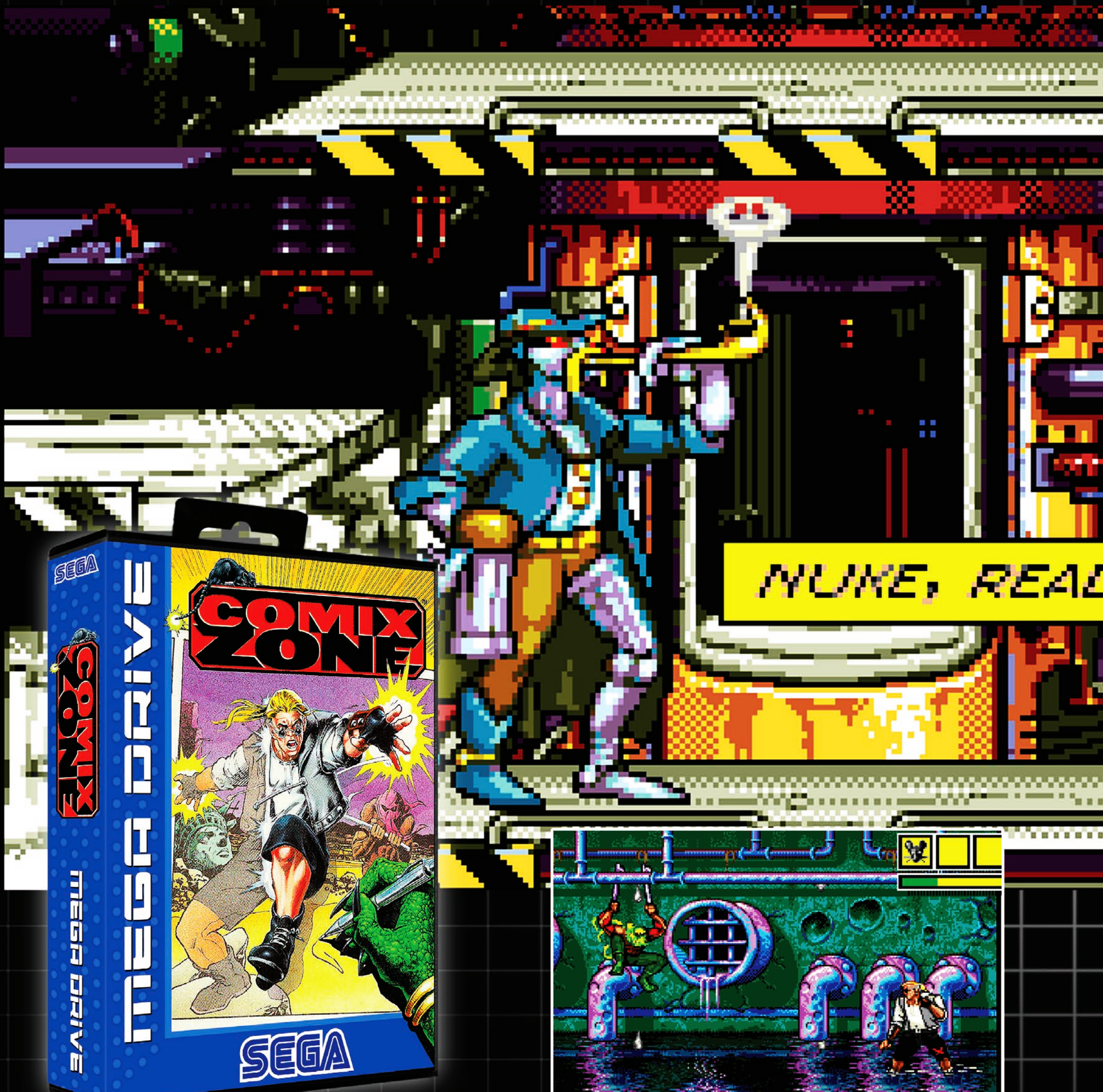
Title:
Chuck Rock

Genre:
Classic Caveman Action Platform title

Developer:
Core Design

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Virgin Media Interactive


NUKE, REA
SEGA
COMIX ZONE
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA

DY TO LAUNCH!

Comix Zone -

Designer Peter Morawiec created a 1992 Amiga demo that blended comic book and game, and Sega turned it into stylish reality. Artist Sketch Turner was living peacefully with pet rat Roadkill, when a lightning strike brought his mutant villain Mortus to life! Mortus traps Sketch in the pages of his own comic, fighting the radioactive Kreeps with punches and kicks. Sketch can carry three items, including Roadkill; the rat can be sent into dangerous areas to retrieve items. Picking up a fist icon turns him into the powerful Super Sketch for a short time, or he can rip off part of the background to throw as a paper plane and damage enemies (at the cost of energy).

There are rudimentary puzzles to overcome, involving switches and blocked exits. Sketch swings and jumps between the panels, with captions and sound bubbles appearing in bright comic-book colours. Although the story is mostly linear, there are secret rooms and alternate routes to discover - and two possible endings. The late release date means it is highly sought after by collectors. Comix Zone would be ported to Windows 95 and appear on several Sega compilations, as well as the Mega Drive Mini, iOS and Android. ■

COMIX ZONE™
START

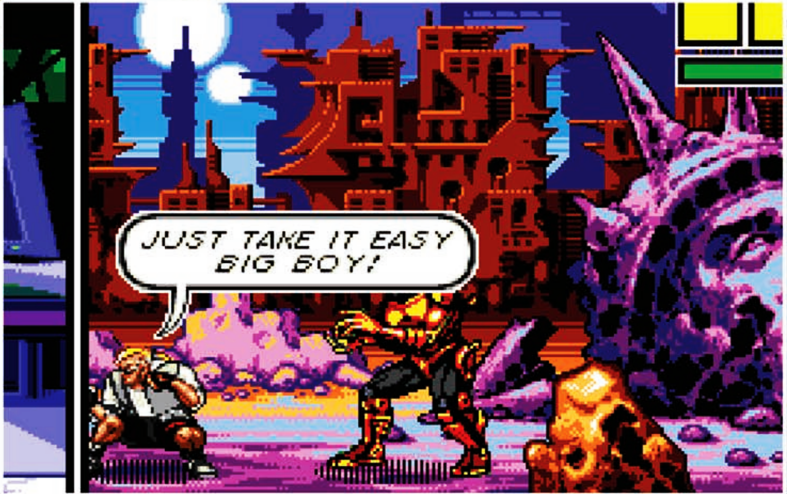
Title:
Comix Zone

Genre:
Arcade Comic Book Beatem'up

Developer:
Sega Technical Institute

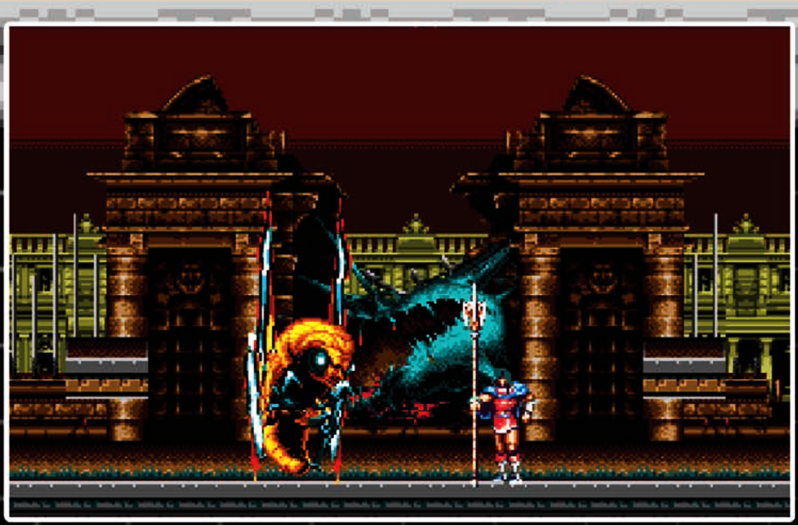
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega



KONAMI
KONAMI
Castlevania
The New Generation
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD. FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA MEGADRIVE SYSTEM.
T-95076-50

SCORE 28300
PLAYER
ENEMY
STAGE 2- 1
78
REST 05



Castlevania: The New Generation -

The house of Dracula has risen again and extended its reach to the Sega Mega Drive! Creatures of the night walk abroad once more and there's only one family who can send them back to the void. Join two Belmont descendants as they journey across the world to stop a global war and put an end to the vampire menace in Castlevania: The New Generation. The only Castlevania title on the system, Generation follows John Morris, son of Dracula's killer Quincy Morris, and best friend Eric Lecarde in supernatural side-scrolling action fans of the series know and love.

Both characters have their own signature weapons — the famous Vampire Killer whip and the Alucard Spear — which can be upgraded and perform special moves. They can also wield a variety of sub-weapons and items to put an end to the slew of monsters in their path. In a Castlevania first, levels break away from Castle Dracula and take place all over the world from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to the Palace of Versailles, all oozing gothic atmosphere. Combined with unique visual effects and a punchy soundtrack, Castlevania: New Generations brings vampiric magic to the Mega Drive, mixing the classic monster-slaying and plat-forming action with new and exciting elements.

Castlevania
The New Generation
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1994 KONAMI
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Title:
Castlevania: The New Generation

Genre:
Arcade Action Adventure Title

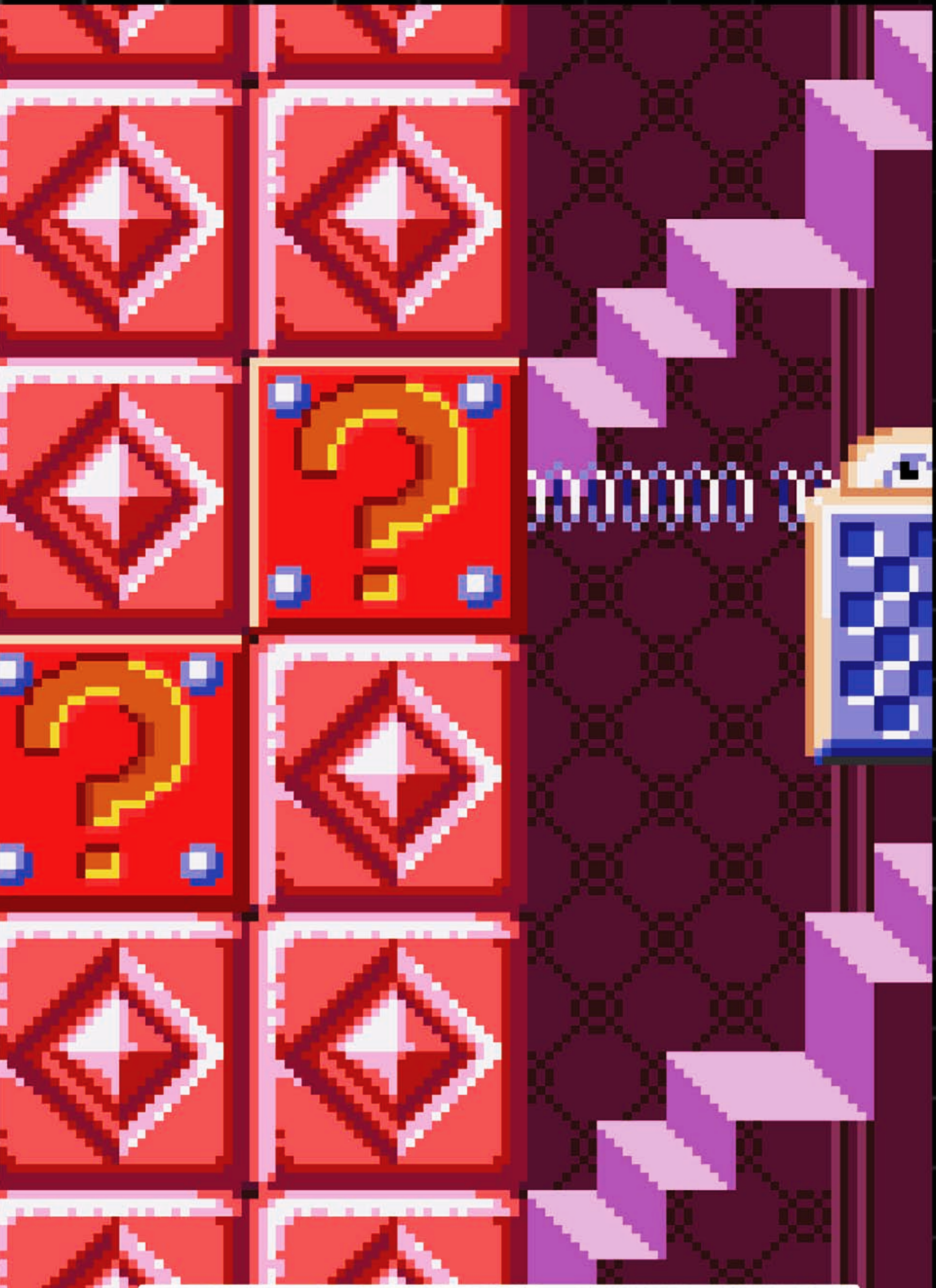
Developer:
Konami

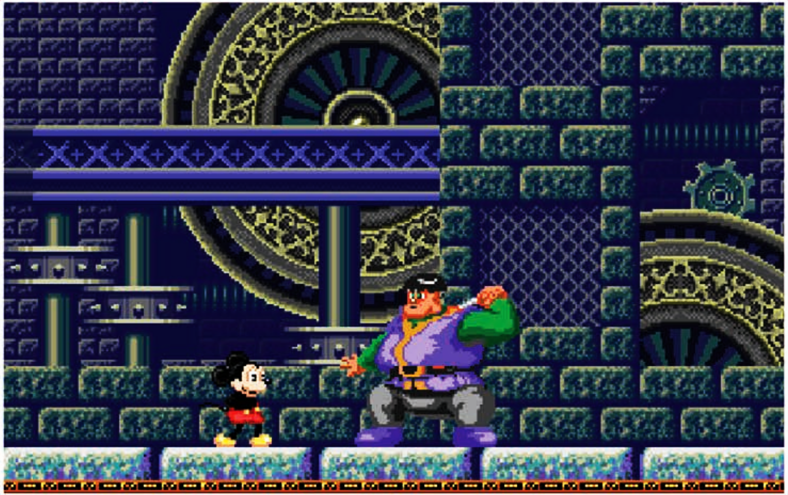
Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Konami

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
CASTLE OF ILLUSION
STARRING MICKEY MOUSE
MEGA DRIVE
CASTLE OF ILLUSION
STARRING MICKEY MOUSE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

POWER
TRIES ×03
ITEMS ×05
SCORE 00001200





SEGA MEGA DRIVE

Castle of Illusion -
Starring Mickey Mouse

Mickey Mouse's second ever video game in the western world kicks off a series of charming and magical adventures in the realm of Illusion. Castle of Illusion sees Minnie captured by the evil witch Mizrabel for her youth and beauty. To rescue his love, Mickey travels to her castle and must retrieve the Seven Gems of the Rainbow by defeating Mizrabel's 'Masters of Illusion'. Each door of the castle leads to a pocket realm with a signature theme and enemies such as the Enchanted Forest with rampaging trees and Toyland with nutcracker soldiers.

The Mega Drive brings these areas to life with smooth animations and vibrant colours; Mickey has never looked so good! The soundtrack is a perfect match with bouncy, whimsical tracks punctuating Mickey's journey through the castle. Fittingly, Mickey can use his Bounce attack to dispatch the denizens or collect projectiles like apples and pearls to throw their way and the levels' difficulty is well balanced for both adults and younger players. A platforming classic that not only spawned a series but shaped the future of Disney video games in general, this is a Mega Drive must-have and still continues to delight and entertain more than 30 years later after its release. ■

CASTLE OF ILLUSION
Starring
MICKEY MOUSE
PRESS START BUTTON
©THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

Title:
Castle of Illusion : Starring Mickey Mouse

Genre:
Disney Action Adventure Title

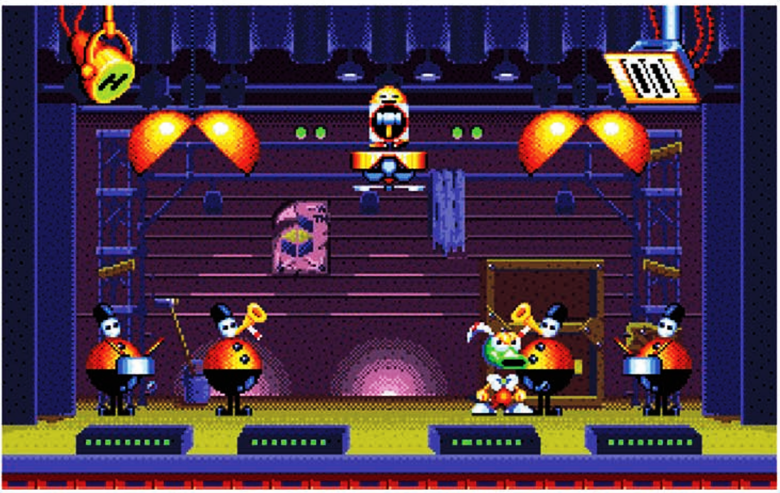
Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1990

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
DYNAMITE HEADDY
MEGA DRIVE
DYNAMITE HEADDY
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA

OPENING DEMO
NOW PLAYING



Dynamite Headdy -

Treasure was always passionate about pushing hardware to the limits, so what would happen if they decided to make a platformer? Dynamite Headdy. It's packed with vibrant colours, powerful power-ups and a character that throws his head to attack, navigate and push things. It's very versatile. The player controls Headdy, a bright and explosive puppet who must travel through huge stages and swap his head to save hi s puppet friends. Changing heads grants various abilities, such as shooting projectiles from Headdy's nose, increasing his attack power or completely stopping time. The constant head swapping forces players to adapt constantly. He can even use his head as method of climbing. Throwing his head allows the player to bite a platform and pull Headdy's body up. The sheer creativity here is brilliant!

One of the more unique things about this game is that every stage is literally a dressed set. The sprite work is detailed to an obsessive degree, showing the imperfections of the stage backgrounds and props. For example, the sky is bolted together and is scrolled along the top of the screen while platforms are suspended using fraying rope. Treasure created a challenging and charming title that is absolute dynamite. ■

DYNAMITE
HEADDY

Title:
Dynamite Headdy

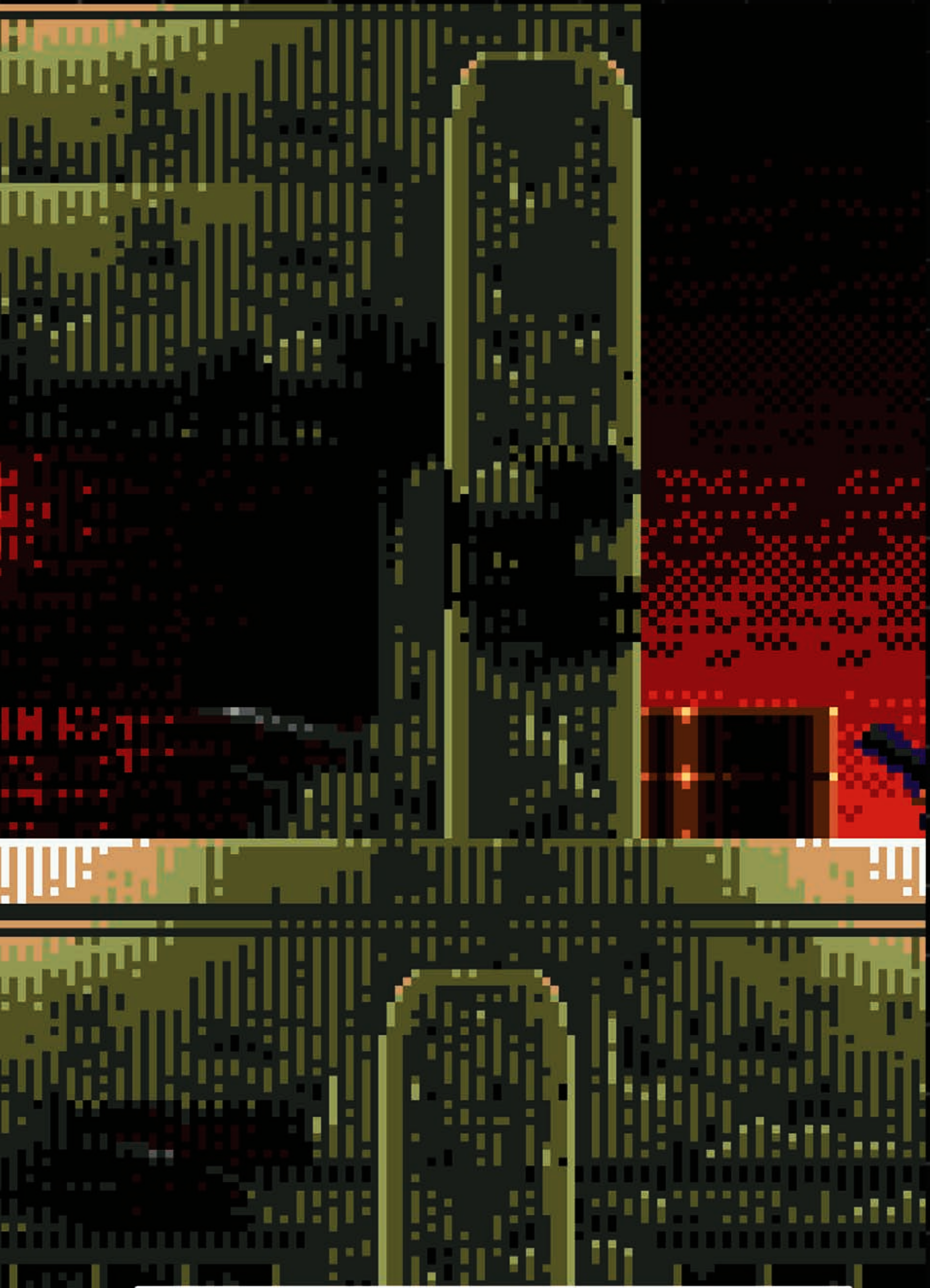
Genre:
2D Arcade Side Scrolling Action Title

Developer:
Treasure Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SEGA
Acclaim
DEMOLITION MAN MEGA DRIVE
MEGA DRIVE
STALLONE SNIPES
DEMOLITION MAN
Acclaim
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM.

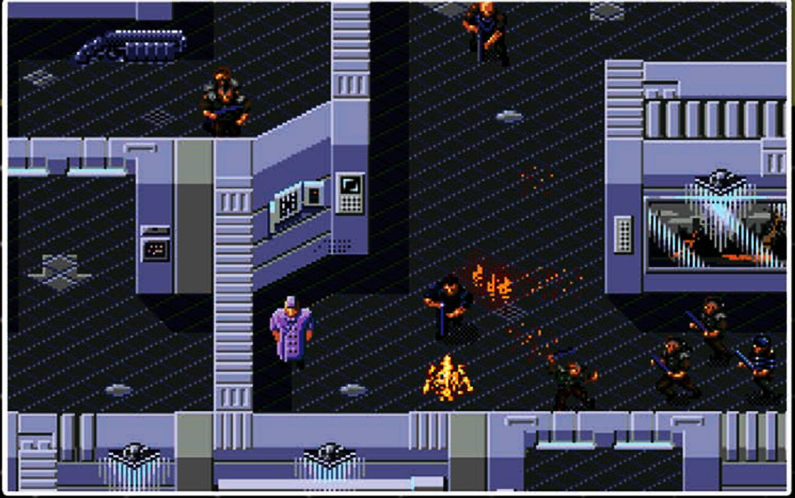


Demolition Man -

Demolition Man was the action blockbuster of 1994, and it was not surprising that a game of it arrived on the Mega Drive. With such an awesome premise that seems tailor made for a video game this should have been an easy slam dunk. Yet somehow Demolition Man isn't as great as it could have been. While the action is solid it is let down by confusing level design and frustrating mechanics. Thankfully this 16-bit version of the game is not a cut down version of its 32-bit cousin. The Alexandria Incorporated version of Demolition Man is a separate adventure that will actually remind you of Acclaim's Judge Dredd, released the following year.

Demolition Man uses two viewpoints. The primary is a side-scrolling action game along the lines of Contra. For the most part the levels follow the flow of the movie leading up to the final confrontation with Simon Phoenix. John Spartan has access to a variety of weapons. One aspect you'll have to live with are your bullets; they are practically invisible and so aiming relies on gauging enemy reactions. Demolition Man clearly has some flaws, yet I found it to be a solid action title. It's a good game but you'll have to accept some of its janks here and there to appreciate its good points. But is well worth a go. ■

DEMOLITION MAN



Title:
Demolition Man

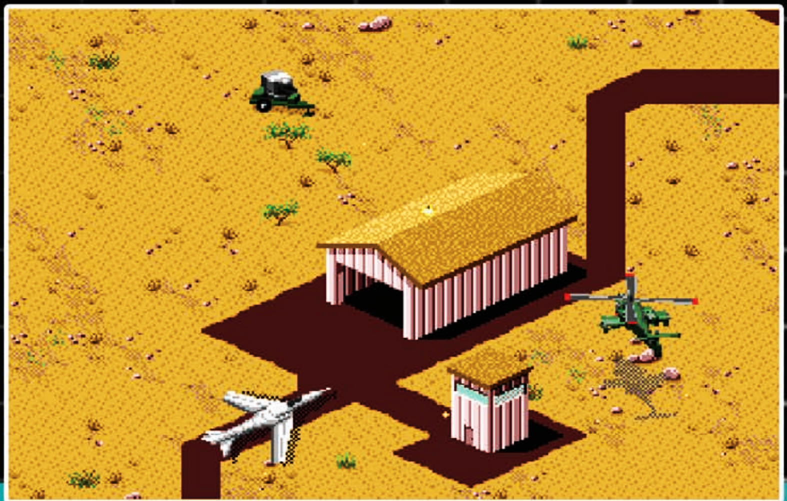
Genre:
Action Gun'n'Run Movie-Tie-In Title

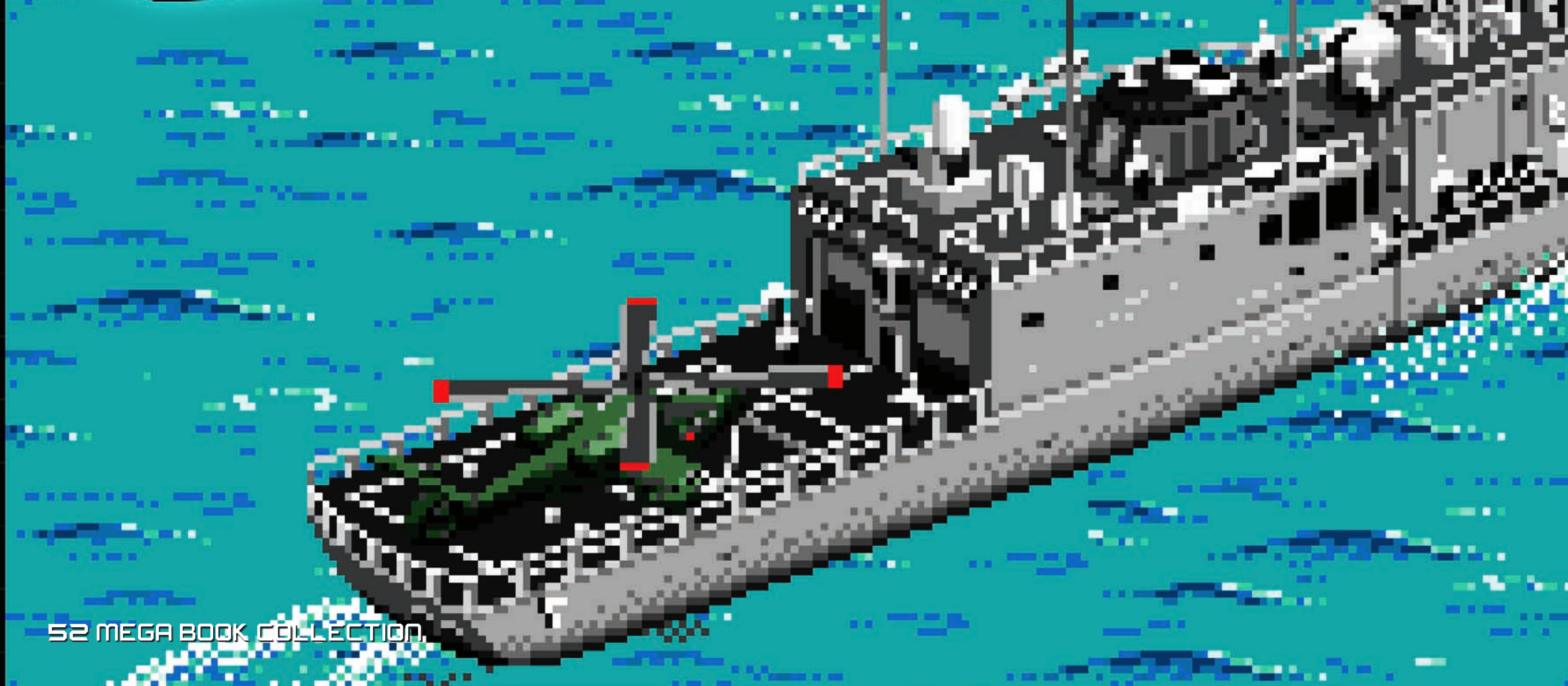
Developer:
Alexandria Incorporated

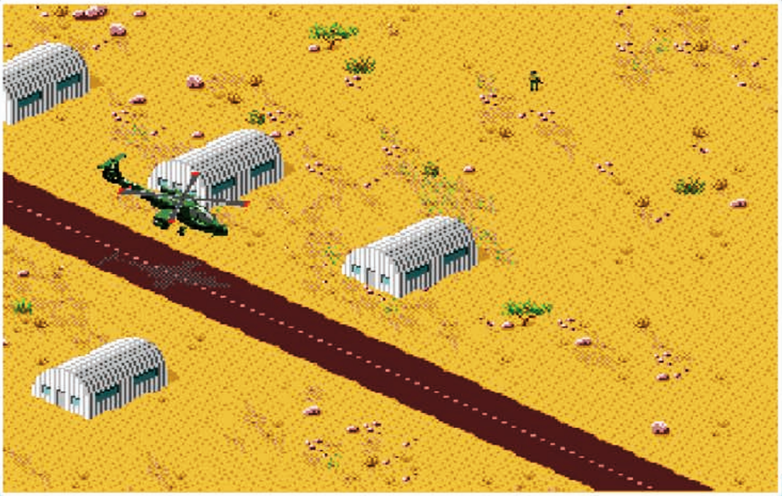
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Acclaim Entertainment

EA AIR FORCE
DESERT STRIKE
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
EA AIR FORCE
DESERT STRIKE
RETURN TO THE GULF
BY MIKE POSEHN · JOHN MANLEY · PAUL VERNON
ELECTRONIC ARTS
FOR PLAY ON SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM
ELECTRONIC ARTS
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd, for play on the SEGA™ MEGA DRIVE™ system.



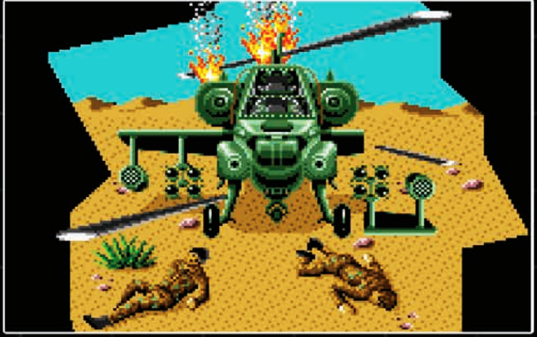




Desert Strike -

The real-life invasion of Iraq in 1991 was the background to Mike Poeshn's development of a game featuring the Apache AH-64 helicopter. Mike's love of Matchbox toys saw him create a deep and strategic game featuring four long missions, each one broken into smaller objectives. Rescuing downed pilots, shutting down a nuclear plant and stopping the launch of missiles is all achieved while managing the fuel and ammunition. A detailed in-game map shows the next target and enemy defences.

Choosing the right co-pilot (or rescuing a better one) improves accuracy with the chain gun, rockets and missiles, or speeds up the winch used to pick up supplies. Armour is depleted by damage until the helicopter explodes, but returning hostages to a landing point gives bonus armour. The delightful 3D models and smooth handling make it a joy to play, while a password system lets you save your progress. There is often more than one way to achieve an objective, but mess up and you get a SNAFU forcing a restart. High magazine ratings at the time led to a series of sequels, but the original remains the most fun. ■



Title:
Desert Strike

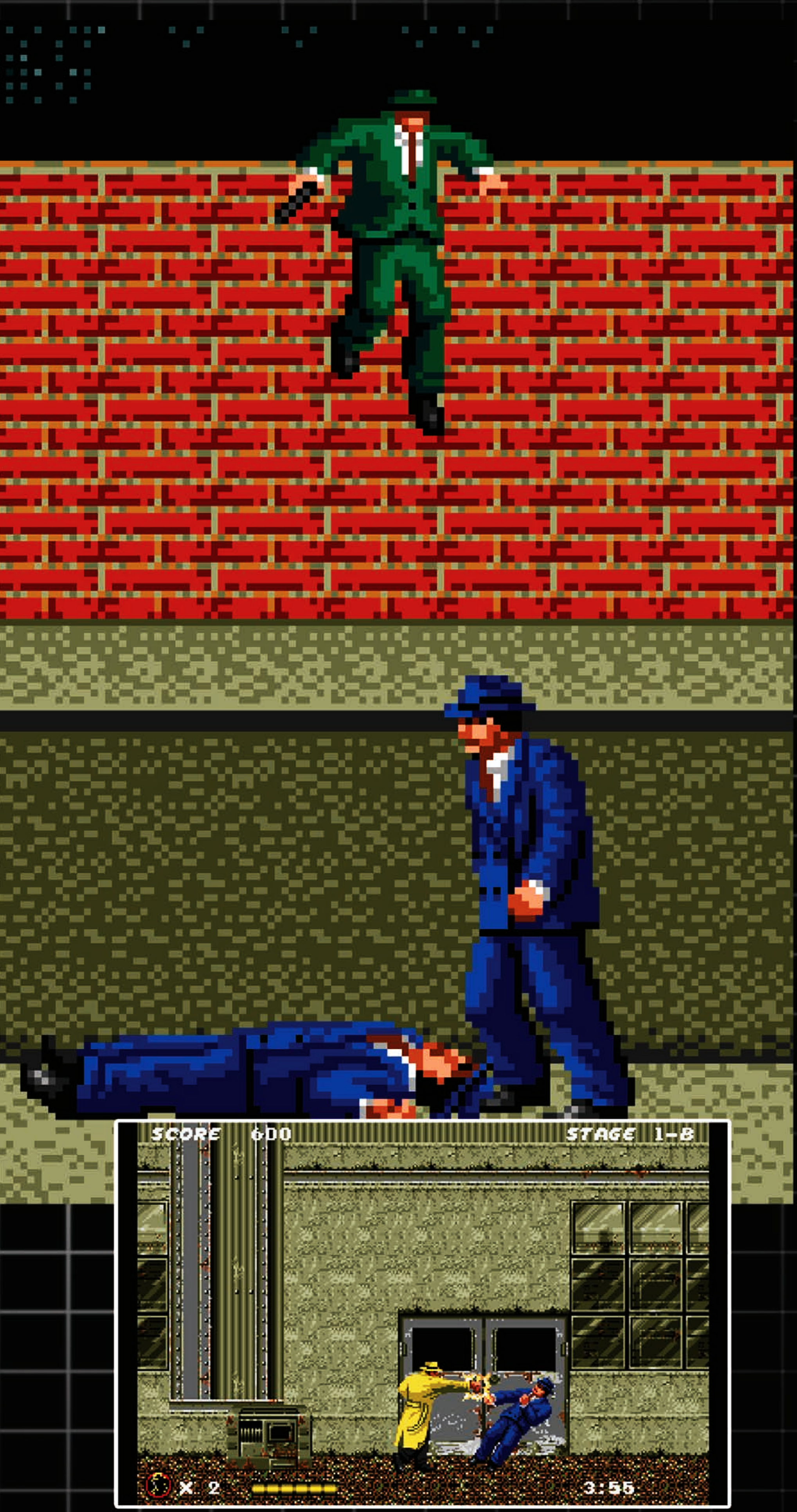
Genre:
Isometric Action Shooter

Developer:
Electronic Arts

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Electronic Arts

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
DICK TRACY
DICK TRACY
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA



SEGA MEGA DRIVE

Dick Tracy -

Calling Dick Tracy! Calling Dick Tracy! Every thug, gangster and hood is out in the streets! The quintessential police detective raises his arm and talks into his two-way wrist radio: Tracy here, I'm armed and ready! Growing up, I remember reading comic strips about Dick Tracy and watching cartoons about this famous fictional detective. When I learned there was a Genesis/Mega Drive game based on this hero, I knew I had to get it. I didn't care whether the game was good or bad, I just wanted to get it.

Thankfully, the game turned out to be pretty good. In the game you play as Dick Tracy as you go through various parts of the city (for a total of six stages) with the goal of bringing down Big Boy. You can jump, duck, shoot with your gun, or even use a Tommy (machine) gun to hit gangsters that shoot at you from the other side of the street. Of course, your machine gun does cause damage to anything it hits, so you'll see windows, fire hydrants, and street lights blow up when they get hit. Each of the stages has a boss at the end that you must deal with and these are known characters from the comic strip such as The Brow, Pruneface, and Flattop. The game was actually inspired by the movie, so there are aspects of the game that play on that. Dick Tracy has bright and colourful graphics, excellent sound effects and music, and enjoyable gameplay. This is one worth having! ■

DICK TRACY
©TOUCHSTONE
SOURCE CODES: ©1990 SEGA OF AMERICA, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Title:
Dick Tracy

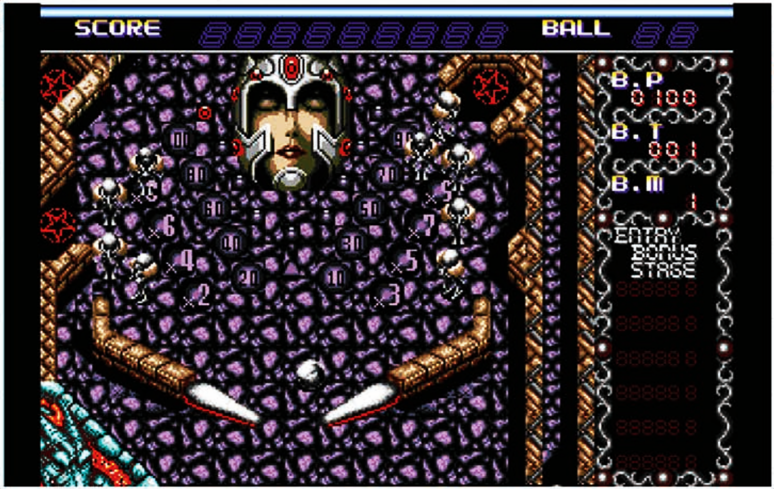
Genre:
Action Gun'n'Run Movie-Tie-In Title

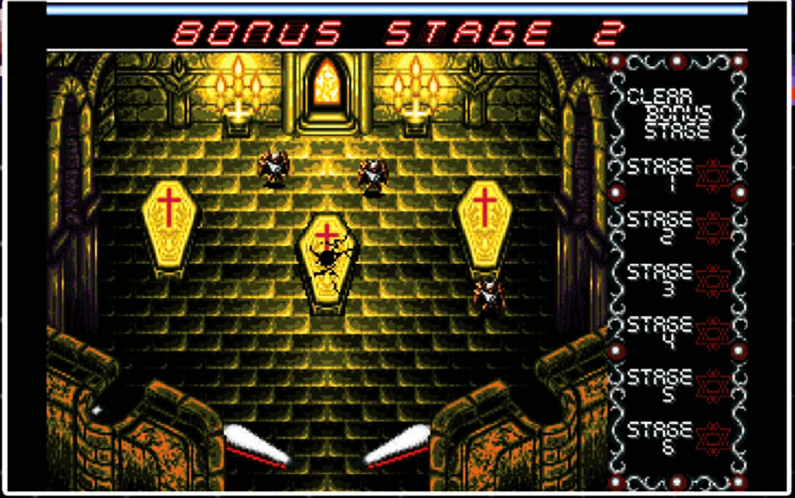
Developer:
Touchstone

Year Released:
1990

Publisher:
Sega

TENGEN
DRAGON'S FURY
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
DRAGON'S FURY™
3D PINBALL
TENGEN
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
301034-0150


SCORE
BALL
B.P 0100
B.T 001
B.M 1
ENTRY
BONUS
STAGE



Dragon’s Fury -

If you are looking for a fantastic game of pinball, look no further than Dragon’s Fury. The game is a remake of Devil’s Crush, a game that had been released for the PC Engine/Tubrografx but one that takes the original formula up a few notches. The table is huge with three levels of flippers, tons of targets (including many moving targets), and six different bonus mini tables. The table combines elements of fantasy with horror as there are medieval devices, sorcerers, skeletons, skulls, monsters and even dragons (hence the name) in the game. Never mind the flying creatures that you can smack with the ball for bonus points.

Many of these also help move the ball around the table. One of the coolest things to see is the head of the warrior princess gradually transform into a dragon so you can then push the ball through the dragon’s mouth and into a bonus stage. These are single screen tables but they each have different themes and different targets that must be achieved to rack up the points. One interesting aspect of Dragon’s Fury is that it uses a password system to choose starting point level, turning the music on or off, and running a time-limited trial. The graphics of Dragon’s Fury are just fantastic, the physics are as true as they can be, and the music is superb. This is a masterpiece for the Genesis/Mega Drive! ■

DRAGON'S FURY TM
PRESS START BUTTON!
TM TENGEN INC.
©1992 Technosoft
©1990 naxat/RED

Title:
Dragon’s Fury

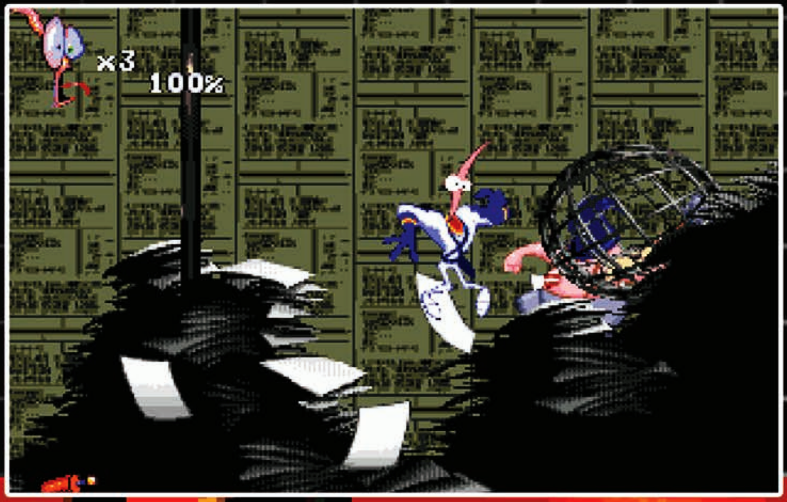
Genre:
Arcade Gothic Pinball title

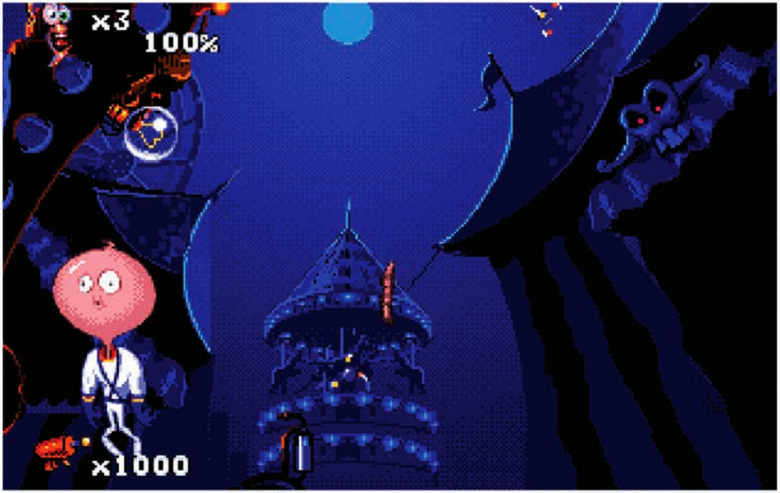
Developer:
Naxat Soft

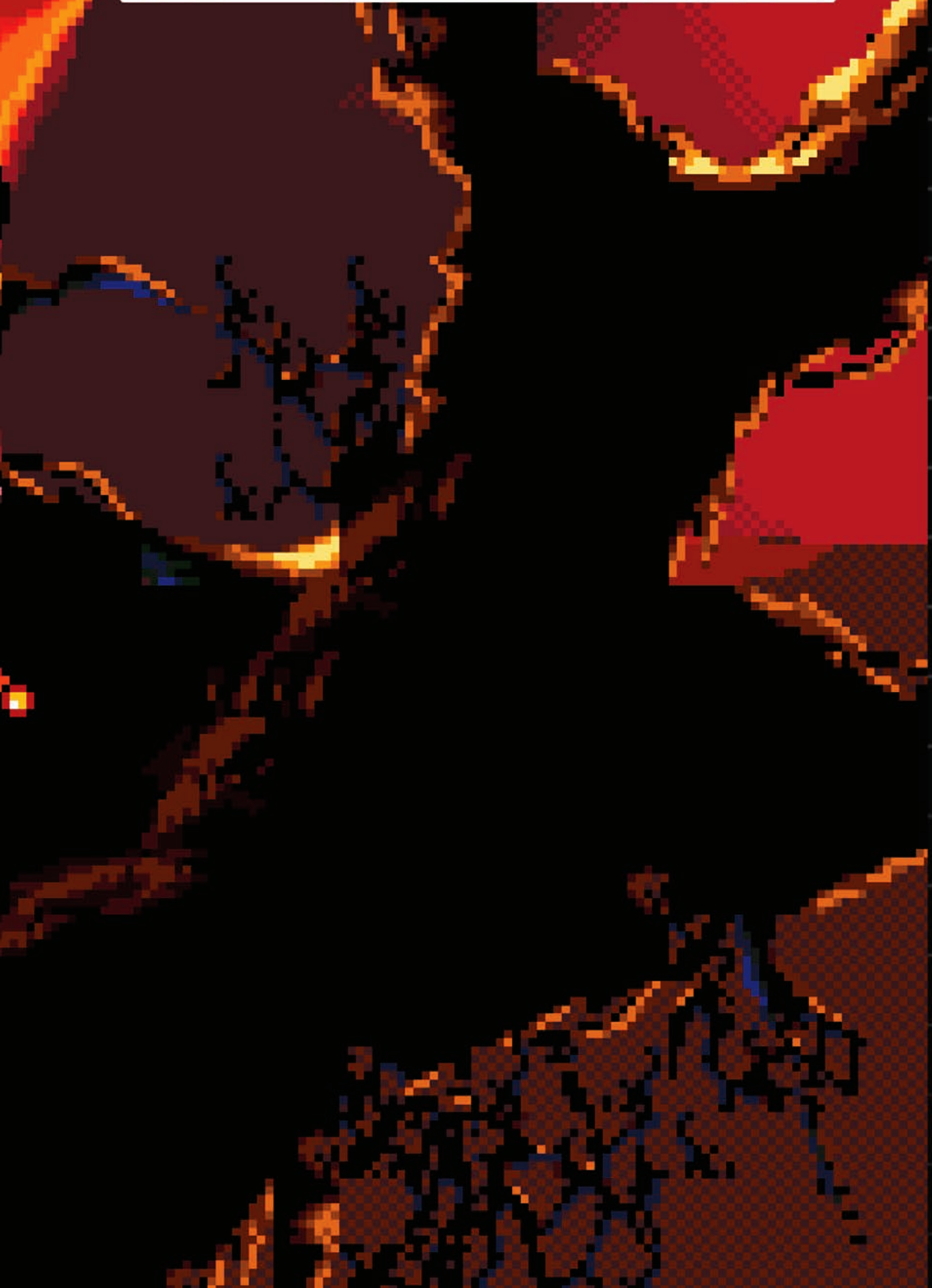
Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Tengen

SEGA
EARTHWORM JIM 2
MEGA DRIVE
PSY-CROW
PRINCESS
JIM
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM


x3
100%





Earhworm Jim 2 -

The last time I played a hard-as-nails platform-shooter is Jak II: Renegade. What this and Earthworm Jim 2 had in common aside from the insanely challenging difficulty, cartoony animation and sound effects and providing me a tendency to cause me to give up whenever I come across a roadblock is the small number of checkpoints. There's no denying the music track of the "Anything But Tangerines" level from the PlayStation 1/PC Earthworm Jim 2 port is the best version. Compared to the PC version, the Mega Drive version didn't have the option to switch between weapons. Considering how useless the Bubble Gun is in combat, it shouldn't be in Jim's arsenal to take up space.

The levels differ from each other, coupled with various game-play differences. One minute I'm floating around as a blind salamander, the next minute I'm flying on a giant missile while guiding a hot air balloon carrying a bomb. It's hard to control Snott like a grappling hook. According to Earthworm Jim lore, he is Jim's partner who lives inside the backpack of Jim's Super Suit. Unless I use cheats, it's impossible to advance further. It's sad to say but it's fun while it lasts. ■

2
Press Start
Options
™

Title:
Earthworm Jim 2

Genre:
Action Gun'n'Run Platform Title

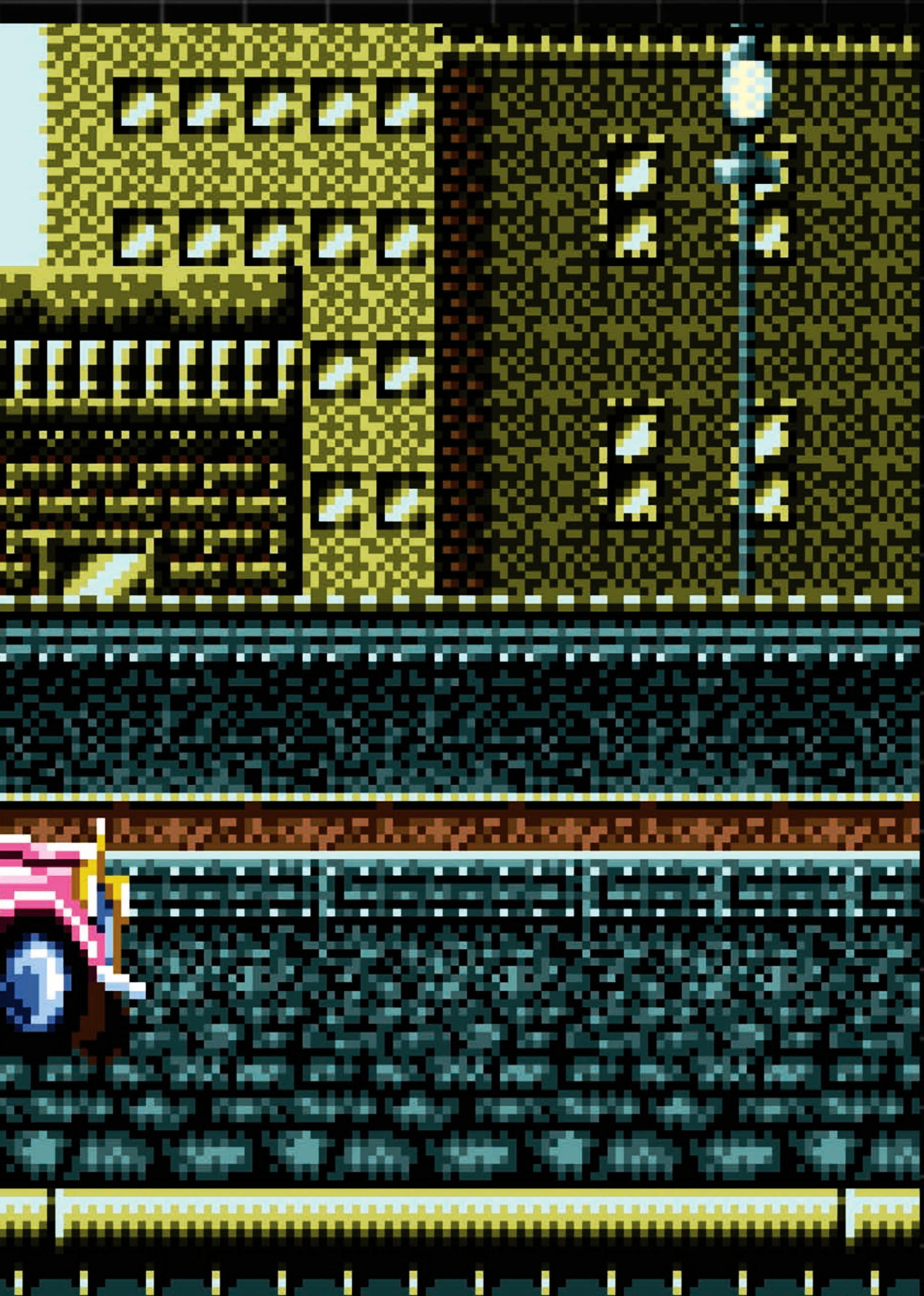
Developer:
Shiny Entertainment, Inc.

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Playmates Interactive Entertainment, Inc.

LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD.
SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA GENESIS SYSTEM
RENOVATION
8 MEG POWER
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
El Viento
RENOVATION
49136

EXP 0333200
ENEMY
HP
MP



El Viento -

The setting for El Viento is pretty unique: set in 1920s America, a religious cult led by Vincente Demarcoto (Al Capone in Japan!) plans to resurrect the god Hastur. Annet, a sorceress and descendent of Hastur, plans to stop him with a little help from fellow adventurer Earnest Evans. Sounds great? El Viento is the second game in a loose trilogy of titles that include Earnest Evans. Only showing up in one cutscene here to give you a pat on the head and likewise heroine Annet is present in one level of his game. El Viento turns out to be a far better game when I first played it.

El Viento means Wind in Spanish and the game is extremely fast. Annet moves quickly and her boomerangs have heat seeking properties. She can also perform a peculiar crouching run that is actually useful despite how ridiculous it may look. There are no items aside from health, but you do have access to magic. You begin with a simple fireball spell but earn new spells at set points, eventually up to six. El Viento is one of the better action games from early in the Sega Genesis' life. But it is also rough around the edges and unpolished. El Viento is still worth checking out after better titles and if you've never encountered it before just make sure not to be overly excited. ■

El Viento
PRESS START BUTTON
©WOLFTEAM 1991
LICENSED BY
SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD.

Title:
El Viento

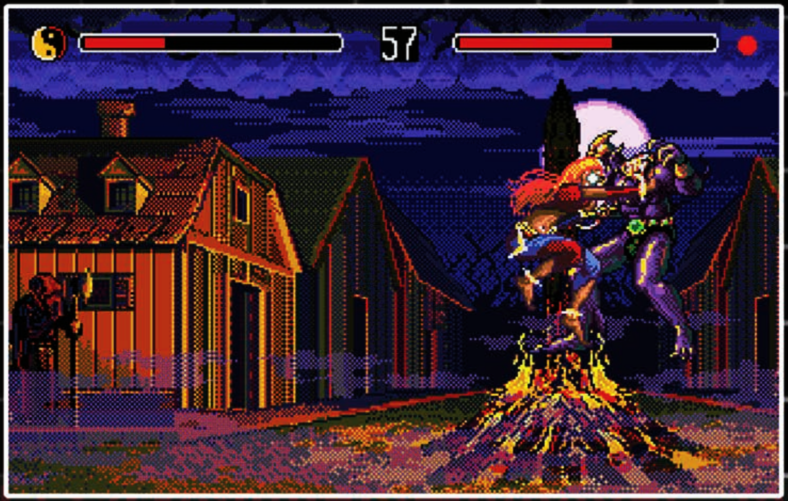
Genre:
Action Adventure Platform Title

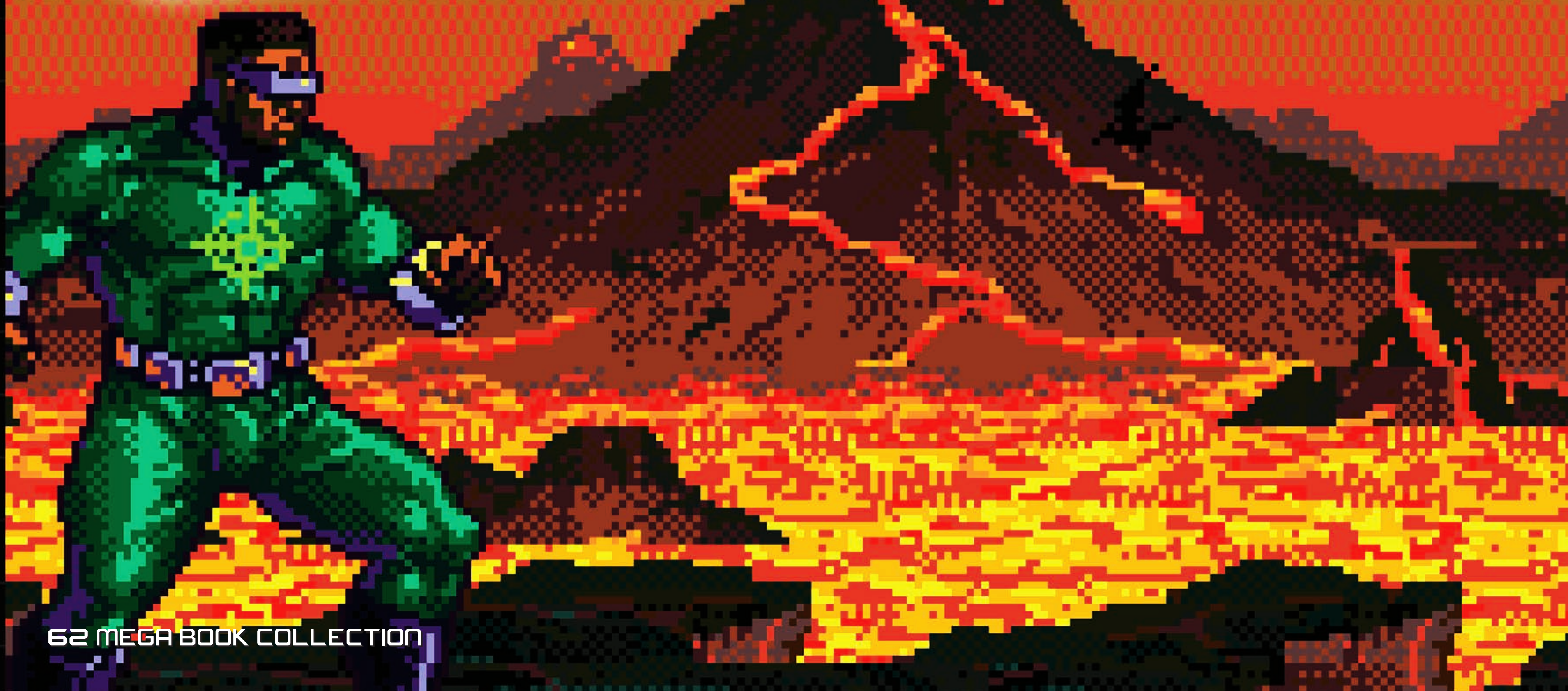
Developer:
Wolf Team

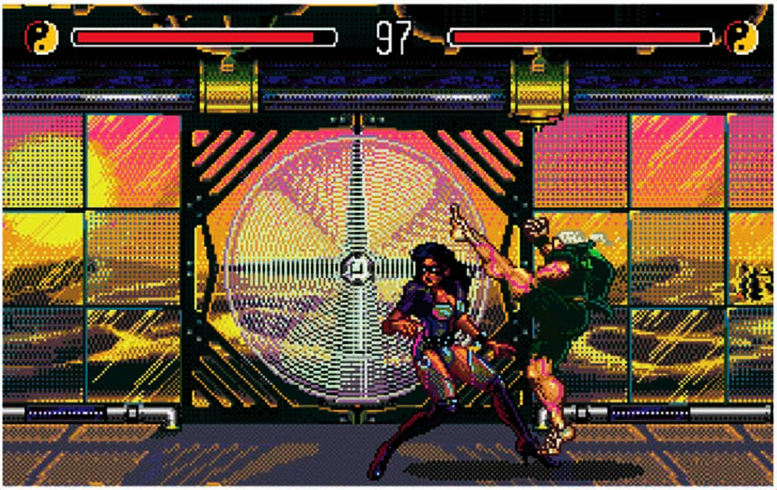
Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Renovation

SEGA
ETERNAL
CHAMPIONS
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA


57





Eternal Champions -

Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat proved a market was there for fighting games. However, these games were ports from the arcade to consoles. Sega decided why not make our franchise adding the need for gamers to utilise the six-button controller in the process and thus Eternal Champions was born. On first appearances, the game appeared to borrow heavily from others already on the market. Yet those that played it knew that there was more to this experience. There were nine fighters from across time such as the futuristic cyborg R.A.X, modern-day vampire Midknight and the pre-historic hunter Slash. Even though common today, this game introduced the revolutionary concept that interacting with the stage environment in the right way at the right time caused devastating finishes to your opponents.

The games also started up a franchise for Sega with sequels and spin-off games on the Saturn and Game Gear systems. Fans in the UK also had a bonus that no one else in the world could claim: Sonic the Comic. Not only did Eternal champions appear in two serials but they also had their own one-shot non-sonic comic book providing story and character backgrounds with insider tips. ■

ETERNAL CHAMPIONS
TM

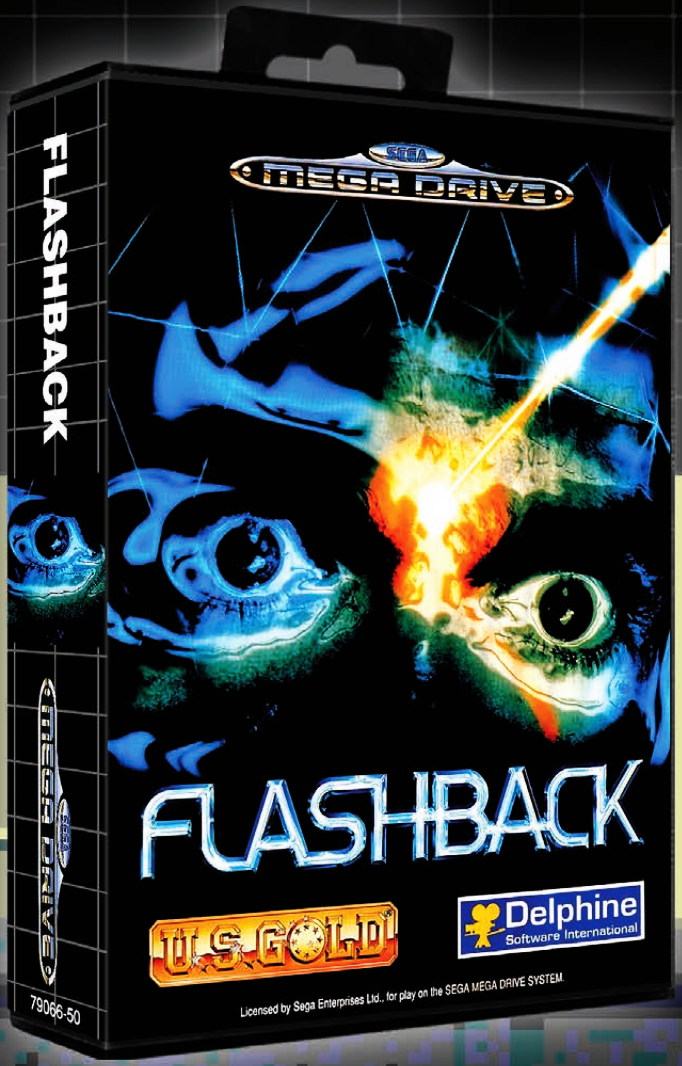
Title:
Eternal Champions

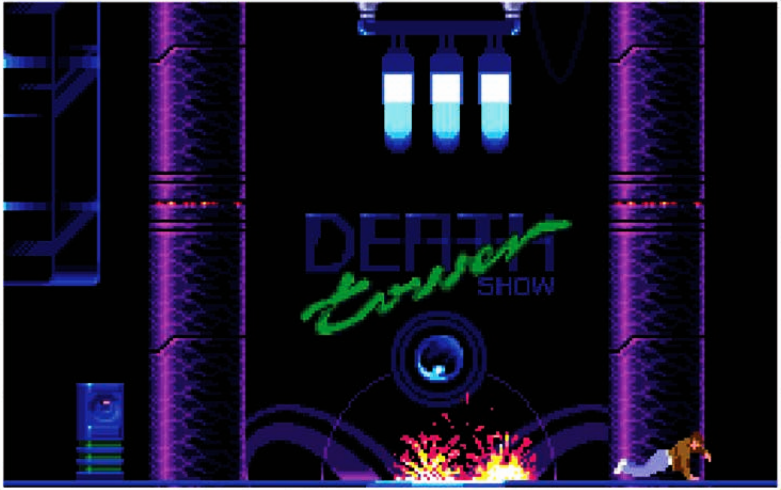
Genre:
Original 1 Vs 1 Fighting Title

Developer:
SEGA Interactive Development Division

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega

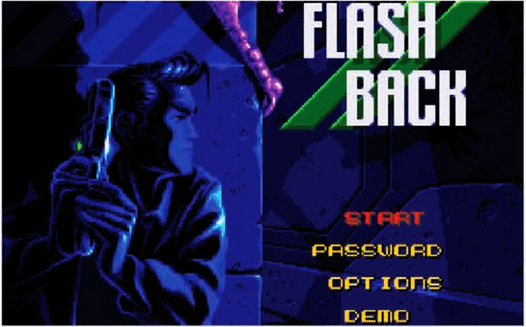

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
FLASHBACK
FLASHBACK
U.S. GOLD
Delphine
Software International
79066-50
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd., for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM.



Flashback -

I've been waxing lyrical about Flashback ever since I first played it in 1993. Truth be told, I fell in love with the Amiga version but the Mega Drive version loses absolutely nothing. On the face of it, you could say it's a simple screen-by-screen platformer (akin to something like Pitfall!) with a plot ripped off the John Carpenter movie They Live. But it's so much more than that. Conrad Hart stumbles upon a way to detect aliens living among humans which immediately lands him in hot water. He's kidnapped, (presumably) tortured, given a healthy dose of amnesia and discarded on a very leafy-looking planet. All he has is a "holocube" which contains a recording of himself saying he has to visit his friend Ian and off you go. Just like that.

The whole premise of being this person who hasn't a clue what's going on, to re-establishing your memory, to grinding your way back to Earth is almost the perfect sci-fi plot. Flashback was commended for its rotoscoped animation and lush graphics but the gameplay is perfectly balanced also. The platforming sections require a bit of thought and the gun action really gets the heart pounding. It's on every platform imaginable so you've really no reason not to own a copy.



Title:
Flashback

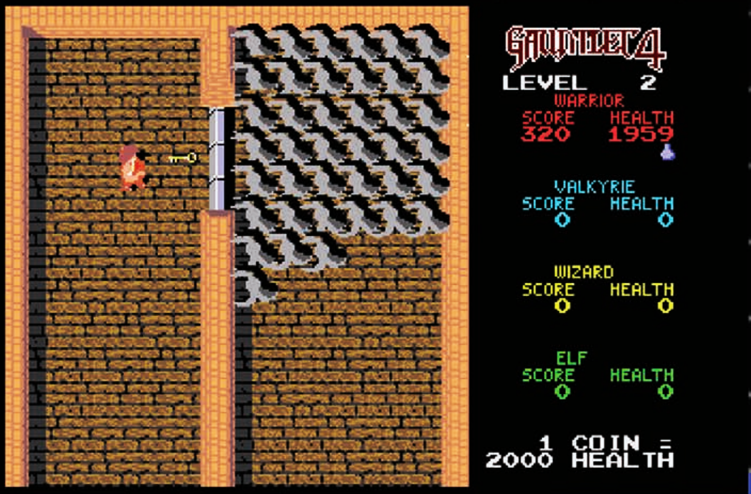
Genre:
Slick Sci-Fi Action Adventure Title

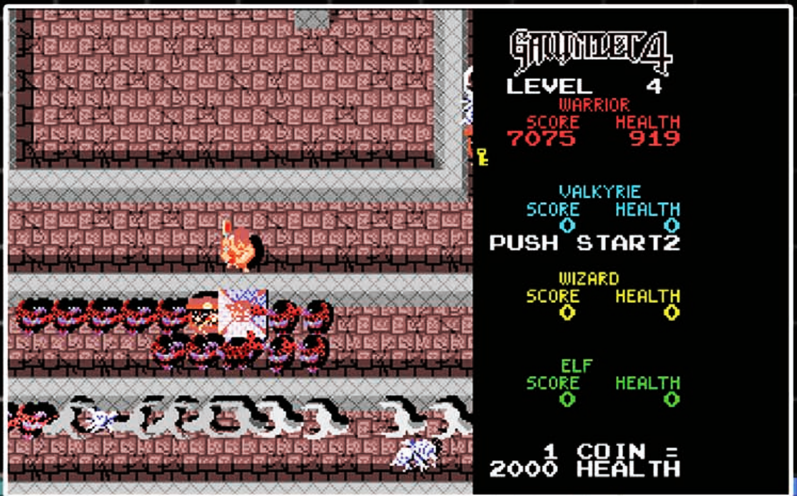
Developer:
Delphine Software

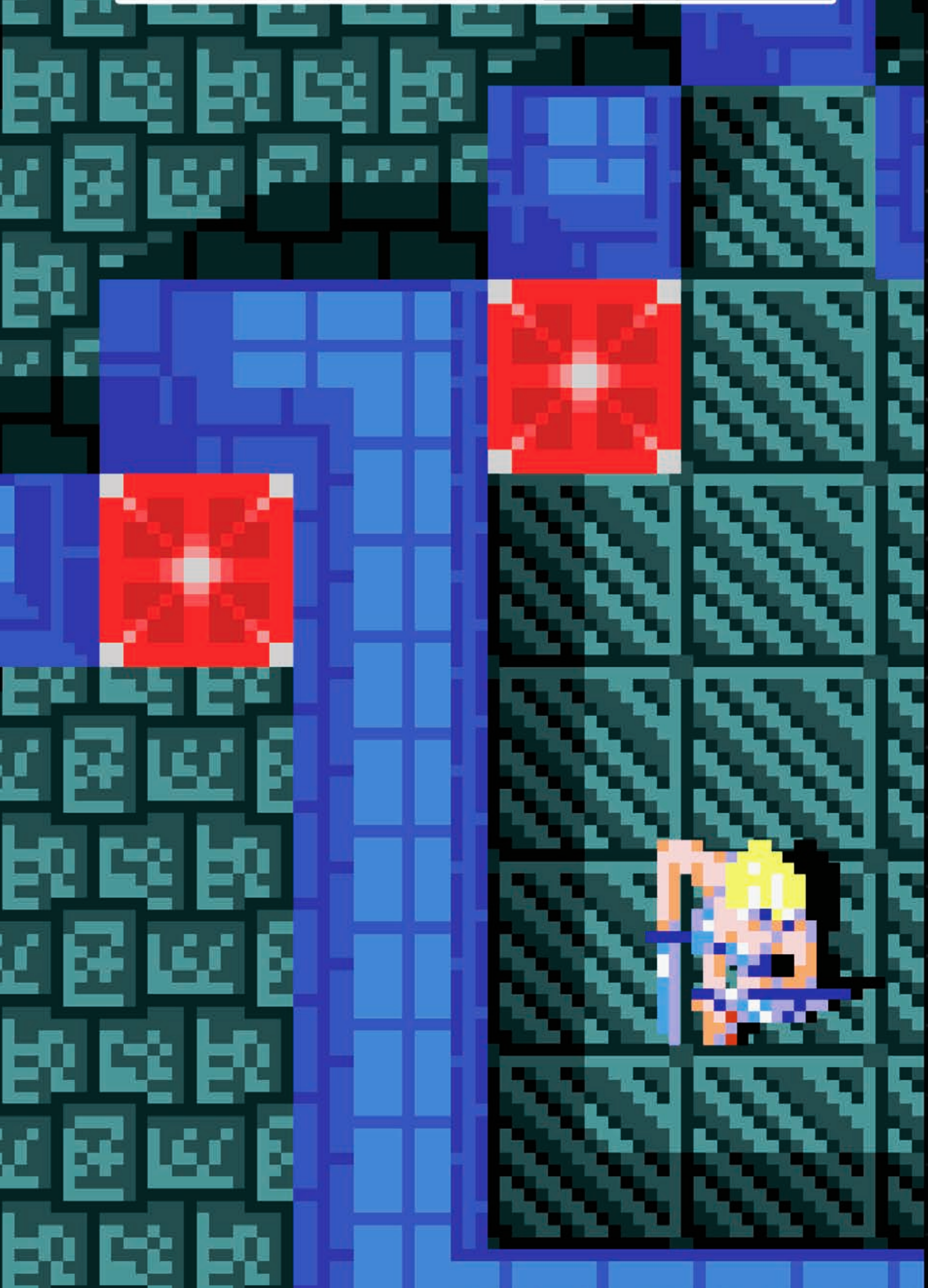
Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
US Gold

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
GAUNTLET IV
4 PLAYERS!
TENGEN
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
Manufactured for play on the SEGA™ MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM.
T-48216-50
301067-0170


GAUNTLET 4
LEVEL 2
WARRIOR
SCORE HEALTH
320 1959
VALKYRIE
SCORE HEALTH
0 0
WIZARD
SCORE HEALTH
0 0
ELF
SCORE HEALTH
0 0
1 COIN =
2000 HEALTH

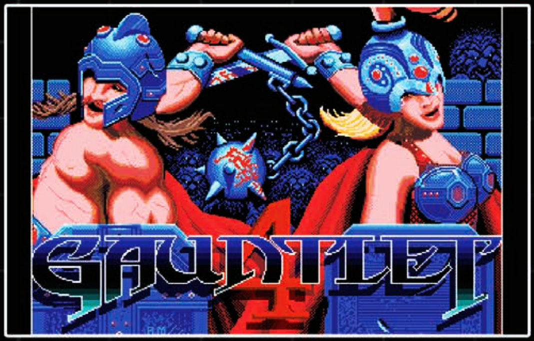




Gauntlet IV -

When it comes to fantasy games there is one game that will always come to mind: Gauntlet. The first Gauntlet game was launched by Atari to the arcades in 1985. The game allowed for up to four players to participate simultaneously by playing as either a Warrior, a Wizard, a Valkyrie, or an Elf. The goal was to travel through mazes, using a top view, to gather treasure and find an exit while destroying and/or avoiding a variety of monsters ranging from ghosts to demons to sorcerers. The original game was very successful and it inspired sequels in the arcades and various home ports. The Genesis/MD version of the game was released as Gauntlet IV in Western markets with the game offering four different modes: Arcade, Quest, Battle, and Record. Arcade mode plays just like in the arcade. Quest mode works like an RPG where the player must defeat four towers and solve the mystery of an ancient castle. Battle mode has the players fight each other to the death. Record mode is for only one player and it allows passwords to be used.

Gauntlet IV does allow for up to four players to enjoy the game by means of the Sega Team Player or the 4-Way Play multitaps. Visually the game is an accurate representation of the arcade, even in how the screen is split to show the score for each player. Sound effects are also reproduced from the arcade. Where the game is different from the arcade, and this in a very positive way, is in the addition of an in-game musical score. Gauntlet IV is an excellent title that should be part of your game library. ■



Title:
Gauntlet IV

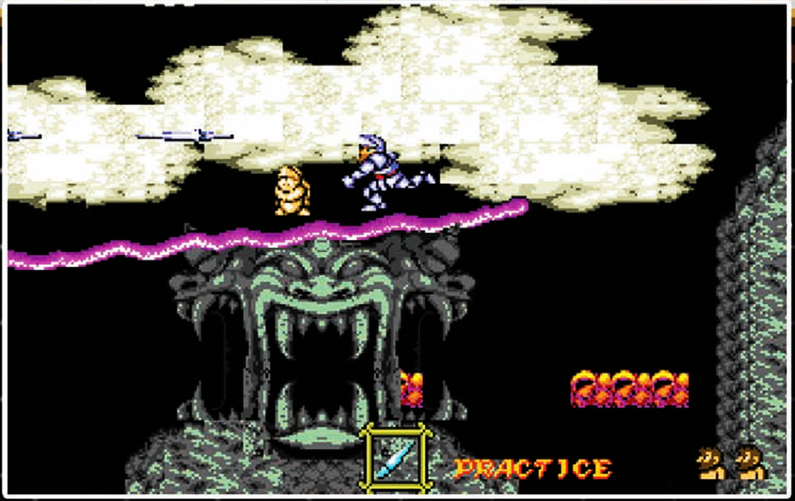
Genre:
Arcade Action Dungeon Crawler Hit

Developer:
Tengen

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Tengen

PLAYER-1
0
TOP SCORE
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
GHOULS'N GHOSTS™
GHOULS'N GHOSTS™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
PRACTICE



Ghouls ‘n’ Ghosts -

While SEGA focused a lot of their efforts on bringing home their arcade hits, they also sought to bring games from other developers at the time. One of them was Capcom. Capcom hadn’t planned on porting Ghouls’n Ghosts to the Megadrive, but SEGA reached a deal to develop the port in-house (Yuji Naka who would later program Sonic the Hedgehog took the reins on this one).

The goal of the game is to rescue a Princess from the Devil himself by overcoming hordes of monsters with increasingly challenging attack patterns. After each section, players are given a map to gauge their progress, always challenging them to improve on their last run. Ghouls’n Ghosts is also quite humorous. When damaged, players will lose their armour and continue in their underwear. There’s something goofy about being damaged so hard that you lose your clothes.

This game was one of the earliest must have titles for the Megadrive, and its success was responsible for the arrival of other Capcom titles on the system. ■

GHOULS'N GHOSTS

PUSH START BUTTON

© CAPCOM 1988
REPROGRAMMED GAME © SEGA 1989

Title:
Ghouls ‘n’ Ghosts

Genre:
Action Adventure Platform Title

Developer:
Capcom Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

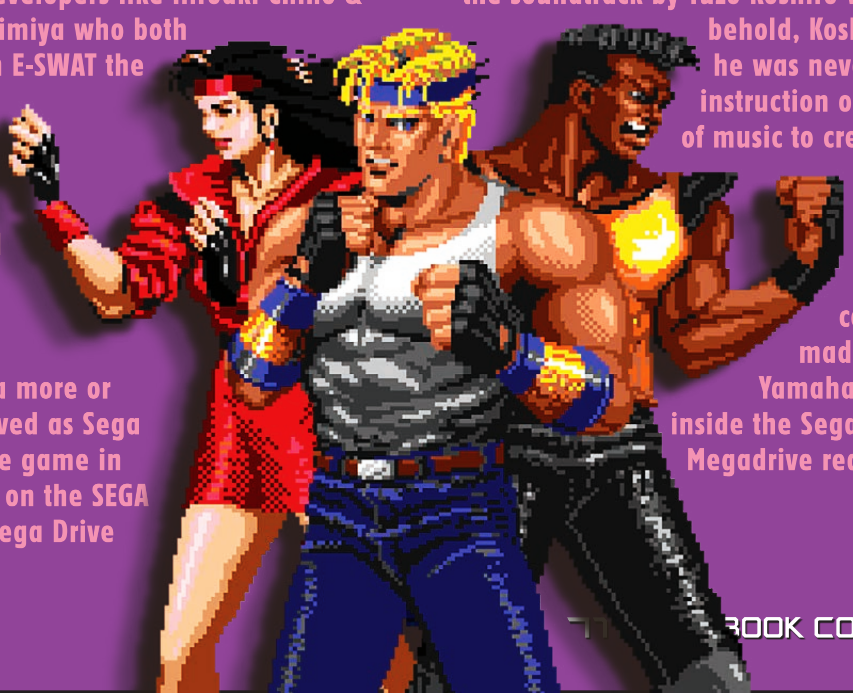
STREETS OF RAGE

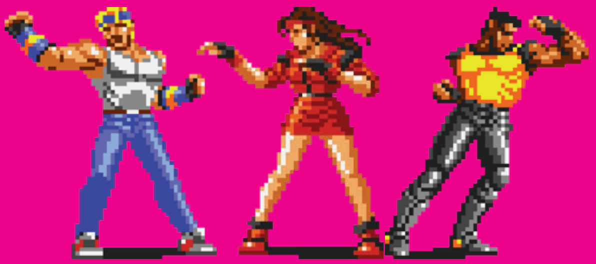
SEGA'S CLASSIC SCROLLING BEAT' EM UP OPUS

Sega's Streets of Rage was perhaps the biggest franchise on the SEGA Genesis /Megadrive, it was certainly the best trilogy to grace the console. Streets of Rage or Bare Knuckle as it is known in Japan was release way back in 1991, the very same year as that really fast Hedgehog. It's fair to say that SEGA was looking at what Nintendo was doing and they had to make sure they could compete, with Capcom releasing a port of Final Fight exclusively for the Super Nintendo, Sega had to react, and react they did.

Noriyoshi Ohba was selected by Sega to direct the new game, still relatively inexperienced started with Sega working on Wonderboy as a planner and then Revenge of Shinobi / Super Shinobi it was this game that gave the powers at Sega the belief that Ohba could create a game to not only match Capcom's Final Fight, but defeat it. Development started on July 16, 1990 with notable developers like Hiroaki Chino & Atsushi Seimiya who both worked on E-SWAT the initial hope was to have the game completed within a 6-month period. That was a more or less achieved as Sega release the game in early 1991 on the SEGA Genesis/Mega Drive it was a runaway success, a huge reason for this success could be put down to the addition of a 2-player co-op mode which the design team thought would be a huge selling point, that was a master stroke because for all the comparisons with Final Fight, like the games mechanics, oh and the roasted meat concealed in trashcans and oil drums. Having said that the team did expand on the game heavily to try and give it independence from the obvious comparisons people will make with the aforementioned game such as adding more abilities when it came to grapples and even featured counter grapple moves for each character, and that Special A button move to call the cops, literally and rocket launching police car simply wipes all the enemies out.

Maybe the best part of the game was its style, it expanded on games like Golden Axe – a modified version of this games engine was used to create Streets of Rage, the soundtrack by Yuzo Koshiro was a joy to behold, Koshiro stated he was never given any instruction on what type of music to create so he just created something he liked, and he certainly made the Yamaha YM2612 chip inside the Sega Genesis/ Megadrive really sing.





Streets of Rage was a perfect start to the series, it was not perfect by any means but they had certainly created a hit game that many preferred over the much loved Final Fight. Sega back then was a company that reacted fast to what people wanted and soon wanted to get out a sequel, step up Ancient, a Yuzo Koshiro company.

What stood out most to me was the striking art work on the box. Quite a hallmark of 90's culture, and an ideal poster for most people's bedrooms. Sadly I was unable to get a poster, but I did get to rent the game and my brother and I were instantly drawn into the co-op play. A simple story, save the city from Mr X, take out all the bad guys on the way. Basically this was the plot for all 3 games. Select one of three characters: Adam, Axel or Blaze. There is one thing I loved about the first game that was never brought back in sequels: if you left the title screen alone for a short period the game would cut to bio descriptions of the characters. I was immediately drawn to Axel because he liked martial arts and video games.

My brother often opted to play as Adam since he was the stronger character. Gameplay was very simple: walk about and punch all the bad guys. Streets of Rage was a little slower paced than brawlers in the arcades. Making it much better suited to a console game. Other features that really stood out was the plethora of weapons you could pick up and bash over peoples heads. You could also grapple enemies and perform cool moves. Lets also not forget when things got too tough you could summon a police car for back up which would take out most of the enemies on screen giving you a short breather. Then there's the boss fights: the music changes, and it becomes more dramatic before they suddenly appear. The boss characters were giant and quite challenging to begin with. After years of playing I began to learn the patterns though.

Mr X, the final boss was a memorable encounter as he would let the player decide to join his game gang or not. If you did you were sent back to a earlier level and would have to go through the game all over again. If you played co-op and you both made different decisions you fought each other. Kinda like Double Dragon. Of course we mostly refused and Mr X rudely pulled out a gun to fight with which seemed a little unfair. I always liked in these games how when you lost a life you fell from the heavens and all the enemies fell over to give you a short breather. Another fun memory was how if you tried to throw a large boss character it would fall on your character due to its weight. Making for some amusing co-op moments.

The original game has appeared on a few collections, like the Japanese version of Sonic Gems Collection. Unfortunately, it was removed from the Western versions to maintain an E-rating for the collection. However, all three games are available on Sonic's Ultimate Genesis Collection for the PS3 and 360. On the PC side of things, it's also been released for Steam. These are all mostly just the game running on an emulator, though.

The best way to play the original SoR has to be the Sega Vintage Collection on XBLA, which includes all three Streets of Rage games. These are more accurate emulations, come with some great extra features like leaderboards, and online play. This version includes a variety of display options, both the English and Japanese versions of each game, and three new music tracks used for the menu screens.

The working title for Streets of Rage was DSWAT. This was to signify the idea that it took place in the same universe as ESWAT, an earlier Sega game. Observant players may notice that the cop car from the ending of ESWAT on the Genesis is the same as the support car in Streets of Rage.

GO STRAIGHT!

In the early 90s, gaming was already a billion dollar industry. But at the same time production teams were still relatively small and thus even start-up companies could work on high profile titles. Among them was "Ancient", founded by composer Yuzo Koshiro. With Sega's Revenge of Shinobi being a huge stepping stone for the composer to kick off his freelance career, the game was very well received, especially its cutting edge soundtrack. Convincing high profile companies like Konami and Capcom to develop for their Mega Drive was still one of the biggest challenges Sega faced. Capcom's Street Fighter 2 was a smash hit in the arcade, and it would only be a matter of time before a port would appear on either Nintendo or Sega's consoles. Sega's President Hayao Nakayama had been desperately attempting to convince Capcom to port Street Fighter two over to the Megadrive after its release, initially to no success.

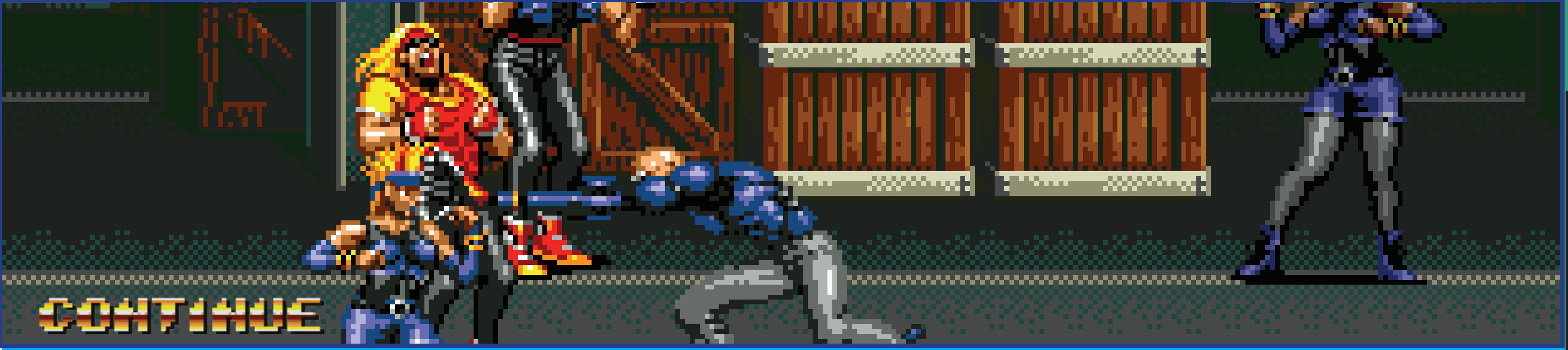
At the start of 1992, Capcom had started development for the competing platform the Super Nintendo, Nakayama knew that Street Fighter 2 would be a bombshell for Nintendo and saw the urge to hit back. During an annual party at their Tokyo headquarters, he personally invited the Ancient crew to his private room. Being pleased with their quality work on Sonic for the 8bit platforms. He entrusted them with a special project, Nakayama encouraged ancient to make the best fighting game on the Megadrive that would match the success of Capcom's mega hit. This ambitious project would become Bare Knuckle 2 aka Streets of Rage 2 was released in Europe and Japan in January 1993, gamers in the US had the privilege of playing the game earlier as it was released in the US in December 1992. Ancient was giving a huge task, every conceivable part of the game was to be improved upon over the original. The sprites were better, being increased in size and giving the characters and identity and power bars, the improvements did not end there, they implemented better controls, and one area that really shone for me was the vastly improved detail of the environments.

There was a downside to these improvements, clearly as part of them, parts of the original game that people had fond memories of, yep, I am talking about the Police Backup scene, well sadly that was removed since diagonal scrolling was being used in the sequel. In exchange for that being removed is a special attacks button was included, now you decide how to use your special attack, they did deplete some of your energy but it was a god send when you got yourself backed into a corner.

The characters changed too, Axel replaced Adam from the first game, then you had Blaze, Sammy and Max, each had their own subtle characteristics, you had to decide which one suited your playing style, whether the all-round ability of Alex, the speed of Blaze and Sammy or the slow powerful wrestler that was Max.

Koshiro's soundtrack expanding on the original, there was a wider vibe to the music, from techno, to funk and a mix of hip-hop too, it really did set the bench mark for others to follow, perhaps the best in game soundtrack ever made, huge statement, but I'll let you decide.

Streets of Rage II was aw huge hit, Sega had something others consoles at the time did not have and therefore everyone wanted a Megadrive/Genesis, the console wars played out for those lucky enough to be apart of it and Streets of Rage II was certainly instrumental in Sega's successes through this period.



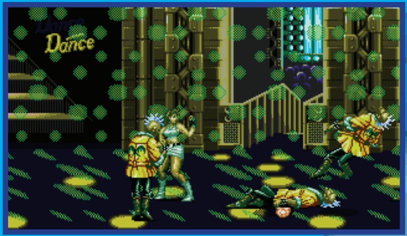
STREETS OF RAGE 3

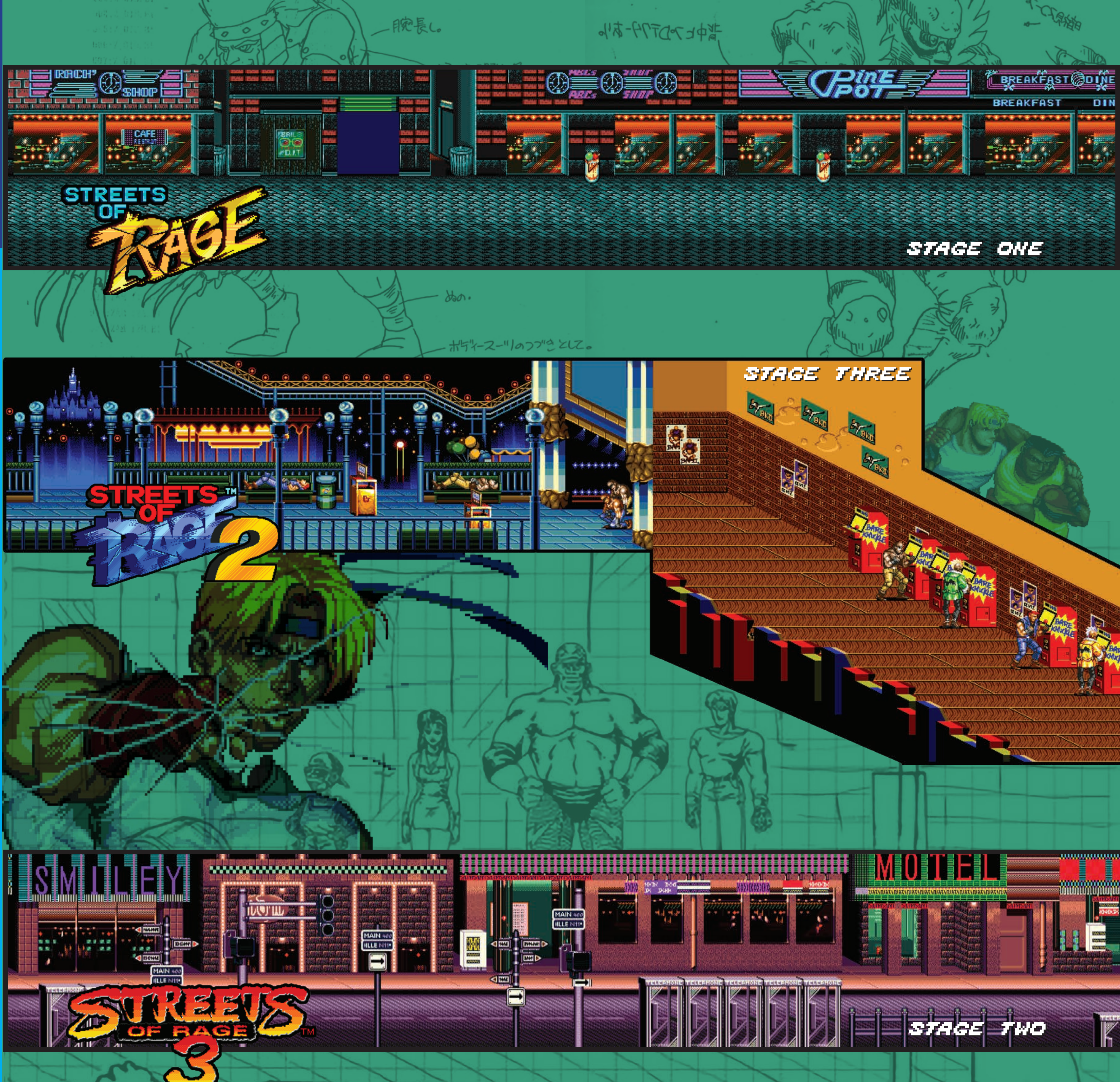
Streets of Rage 3, was this time developed in house at Sega, the lead designer was once again Noriyoshi Ohba, Ohba and the team made lots of changes this time around. A huge expanded story with alternate paths for you to choose, there was new dash moves added for all of the characters and Max was replaced by a new character called Dr. Zan a cyborg who is not strong as Axel, but is slightly faster. Sadly, all these changes were probably too much, people wanted more of the Streets of Rage 2 feel and this went way above that. After being defeated twice, Syndicate crime boss Mr. X has started a research company to act as a cover for his illegal activities. The world's best roboticist, Dr. Dahm (Dr. Zero in Japan), has been brought in to help him create an army of realistic robots to replace important officials from the city. With the replacements in place, Mr. X plans to run the city using a remote control device. His criminal organization, The Syndicate, has strategically placed bombs around the city to distract the police while the city officials are dealt with.

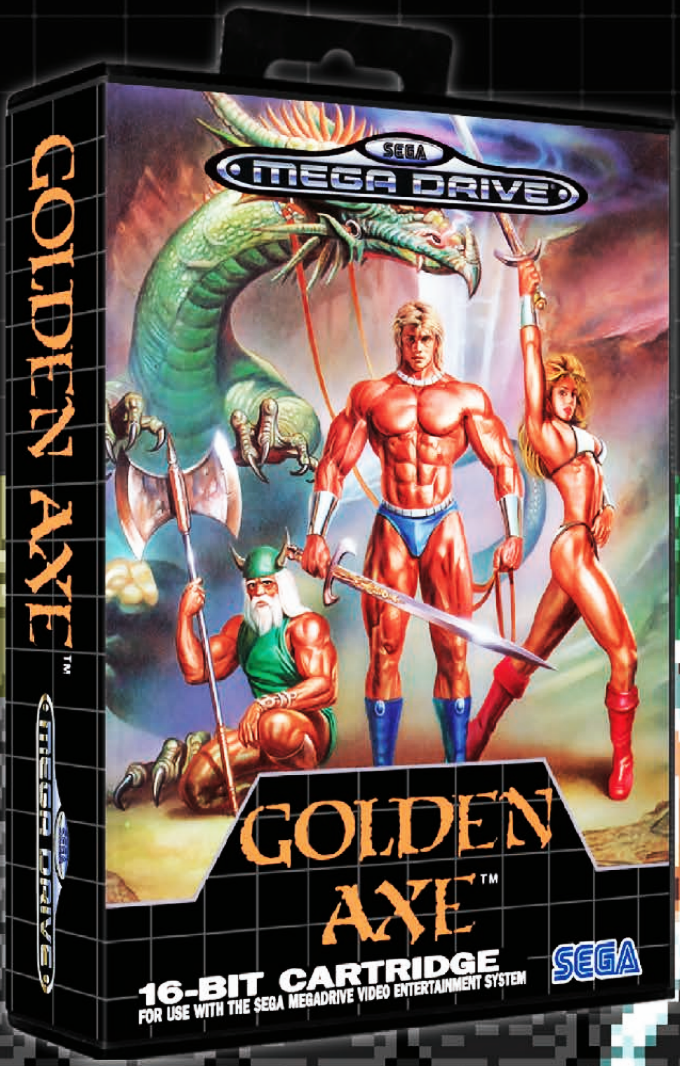
Three of the playable characters from former games return in the sequel: Axel Stone, Blaze Fielding, and Eddie "Skate" Hunter. Dr. Zan replaces Max, Adam from the first game makes a story cameo, and Max only makes a cameo appearance in the game's "good" ending.

Facts about the often polarising Streets of Rage 3 regarding international versions of the game featured extensive changes from the Japanese original which was known as Bare Knuckle 3. This includes the main characters, clothing, colours, difficulty settings, and the game story. In fact, a lot of censorship was included in the Western version too, including character's clothing being made less revealing and the removal of "Ash" as a playable character due to him being considered a negative stereotype of a homosexual man. Yuzo Koshiro, often heavily criticised for the music in the game was influenced by Detroit's hard techno scene, which was popular in Tokyo nightclubs at the time, but because Koshiro would create the composition using a method called "The Automated Composing System" to produce a fast beat techno like jungle incorporating heavily randomised sequences from which Koshiro states "it is music that you ordinarily never could imagine on your own". This method was very rare at the time but would later become popular among techno and trance music producers.

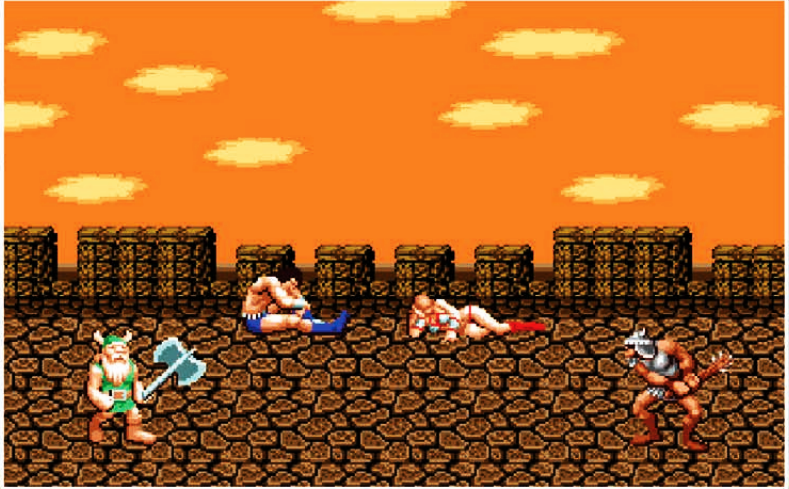
The Japanese version is reported to be slightly easier than that of the one we had in the western world, perhaps if we had that version then perhaps this would not have been the black sheep of the trilogy. Streets of Rage 3 is not a bad game, please don't think that's what I am saying, it just fell foul of its prequels successes and the need to keep improving, when sometimes you just do what works, like Streets of Rage II




腕長し。
ぬめ。
ボディースーツのつづきとして。
STREETS OF RAGE
STAGE ONE
STREETS OF RAGE 2
STAGE THREE
STREETS OF RAGE 3
STAGE TWO
SMILEY
MOTEL
BREAKFAST
CAFE


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
GOLDEN AXE™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

MAGIC
STAGE 5
3



Golden Axe -

Unleash your inner Conan the Barbarian as the popular medieval fantasy beat-em-up makes it way to home consoles! Golden Axe sets the scene of the land of Yuria, a kingdom under the tyrannical rule of Death Adder, wielder of the 'Golden Axe'. Play as one of three warriors who have lost loved ones to the evil ruler and put an end to his reign of terror. Each of the three protagonists, a dwarf warrior, barbarian and Amazon fighter, have their own signature weapons and are able to cast powerful elemental magic to dispatch Death Adder's henchmen, skeleton warriors and knights.

Collecting potions from kicking sprites will enhance your magical power, making you a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield. And as well as your own fighting strength, you can acquire a creature known as a 'Bizarrian' as a steed, ranging from the basic Cockatrice which can tail-whip enemies to a powerful dragon which can either shoot fireballs or breath fire. Golden Axe faithfully recreates the excitement of the arcade version wonderfully, spawning a decade-spanning franchise and shaping many beat-em-ups that followed it. It's sure to get your adrenaline pumping and fuel your appetite for sword and sorcery! ■

戦斧
GOLDEN AXE
SEGA
©SEGA 1989

Title:
Golden Axe

Genre:
Classic Arcade Action Slashem'up

Developer:
Sega (AM7 Team)

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
GOLDEN AXE II
GOLDEN AXE II
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
MAGIC
1 23456
2

Golden Axe II -

Golden Axe II was released for the Megadrive in December of 1991 and the story takes place after the events of the first game. Death Adder has been slain but a new evil emerges. Dark Guld also known as the Lord of Darkness who was sealed away a long time ago escapes his imprisonment, obtains the powerful Golden Axe, and wants to bring the world to chaos. Gilius Thunderhead, Ax Battler, and Tyris Flare – the three heroes from the first game – return and set out to stop Dark Guld and reclaim the Golden Axe. The three playable characters have their own strengths and weaknesses but can perform the same basic functions. They can each walk, dash, jump, perform attacks, grab and throw enemies, and cast their own unique magic spells as in the first game.

The single player Duel mode can actually be a good way to practice against enemies but the mode itself didn't hold our interest for long in terms of fun factor. The real meat of the game is the Arcade mode. Ultimately, I would recommend Golden Axe II to fans of beat 'em ups, It does kind of feel like a rehash. The changes to magic and refinements to the combat make it more enjoyable but it still feels like a product of its time. It's a classic albeit stiff beat 'em up that will kick your ass and make you earn success. ■

GOLDEN AXE
TM
II
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1991 SEGA

Title:
Golden Axe II

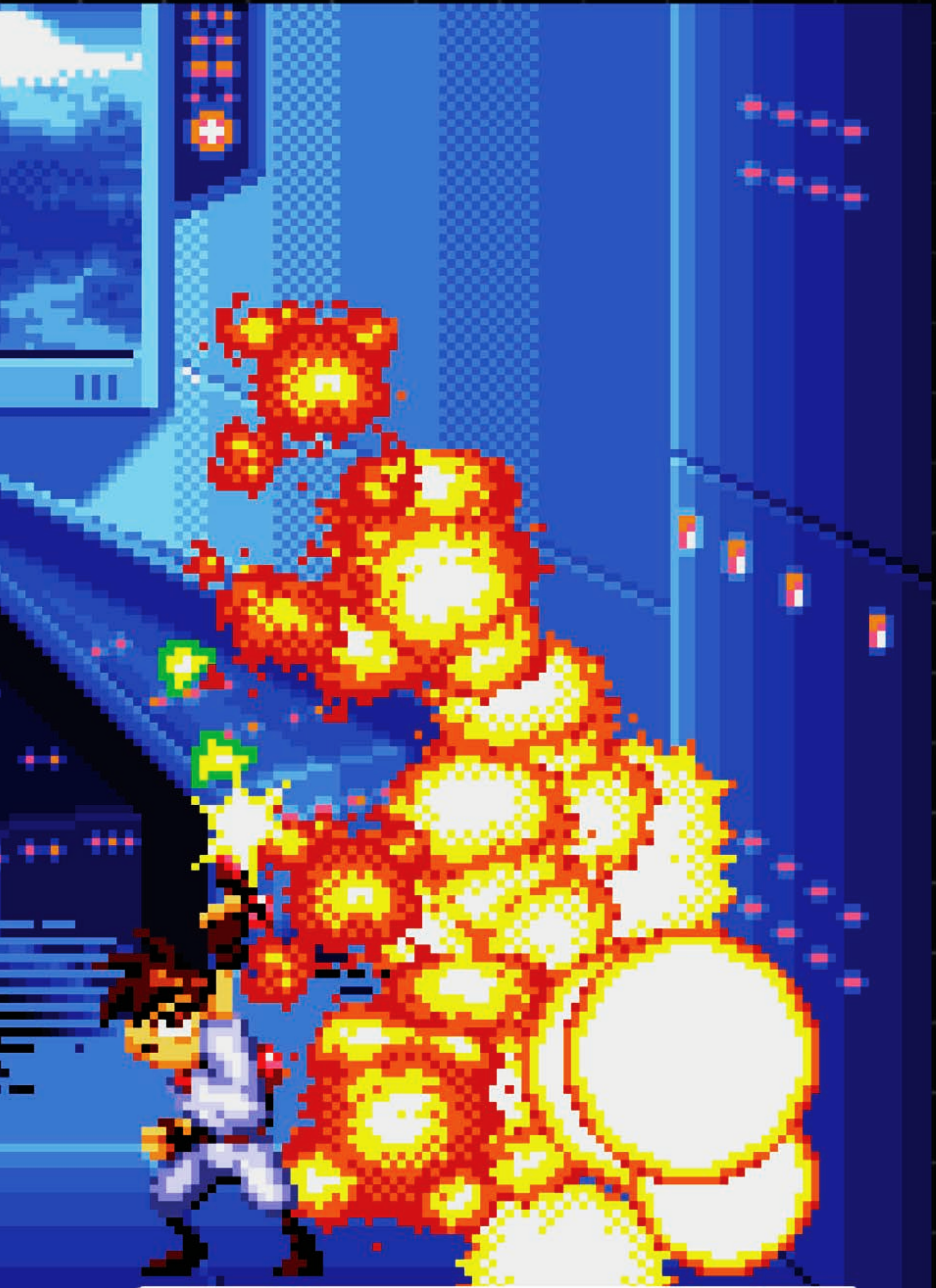
Genre:
Classic Arcade Action Slashem'up

Developer:
Sega

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
GUNSTAR HEROES
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
2635



Gunstar Heroes -

Gunstar Heroes is an absolute gem of a game. It's a classic that serves as a real showpiece for the Megadrive. Developed by Treasure, this run and gunner makes use of a variety of different graphical techniques. Sprite scaling and rotation create huge bosses on a scale few games have managed to match. The animation is fluid and has a bright and cartoony aesthetic with characters that burst with charm. It has multiplayer too!

Gunstar Heroes excels at giving players the freedom to play in a style that suits them and gives them the opportunity to dictate how the game will play right from the start. There are two control systems to choose from: Free Shot and Fixed Shot. Free Shot allows players to move freely while shooting, while fixed shot locks players in place when they pull the trigger. The benefit to staying still is that you can shoot in 8 directions with superior accuracy, but positioning is more important to prevent being hit. On top of this, the game also lets players choose their starting weapon, giving each play through a different flavour. This is a very ambitious game, and its dedication to player decision is incredible. ■

GUNSTAR HEROES™
PRESS START
© 1993 SEGA

Title:
Gunstar Heroes

Genre:
Action Run & Gun Platformer

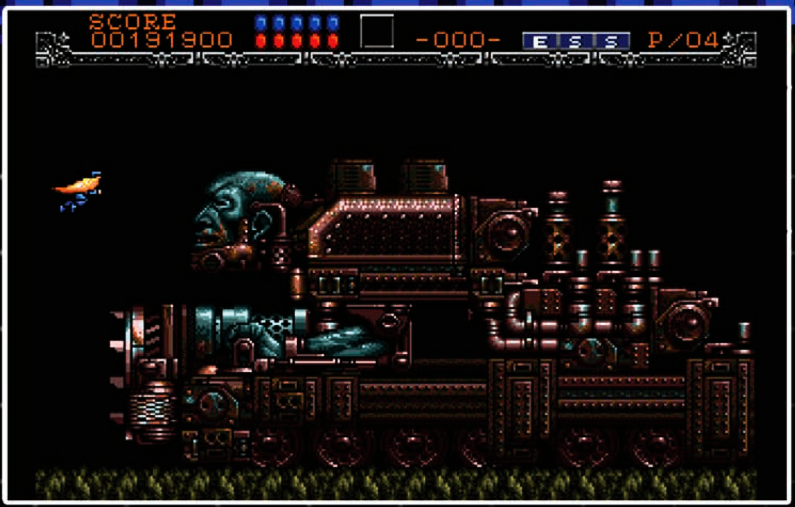
Developer:
Treasure Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
GYNOUG
MEGA DRIVE
GYNOUG
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

SCORE
00282600
THUNDERBOLT
-020-
LIT
P/04



Gynoug -

Gynoug is a side scrolling shooting game, with a mythical theme, released in 1991. It was named “Wings of Wor” in the US. You assume the role of the winged hero, Wor, a Battle Master of the planet Iccus and, in typical fashion, you’re the only badass that has a chance of single-handedly saving the planet from the invasion of the Mutants of Iccus, led by the evil Destroyer. This is a daunting task, however, as the game’s six levels are littered with all kinds of enemies and two bosses per level! Luckily, you’re provided plenty of opportunity to power up your weapons, magic and speed by collecting various items.

The pace of Gynoug is fast and frenetic, especially when Wor is fully tooled up and flying around at full speed. This can make the controls a little twitchy and quick response is required to keep our hero alive. If you do get tagged by a mutant, you instantly lose a life but you’re immediately thrown right back into the action and with only a minor hit to your weapon power. The gameplay is complemented by a fantastic musical score that is in keeping with the quick tempo on screen and helps to distil an energetic atmosphere. Overall, there is enough variety to keep fans of the genre returning in an attempt to beat it, and you’re going to need a lot of skill to reach the end boss who does not appear in the manual but is listed with the provocative statement, “PREPARE FOR THE WORST!”. Good luck! ■

GYNOUG
PUSH START BUTTON
START
OPTIONS
COPYRIGHT NCS CORP 1991

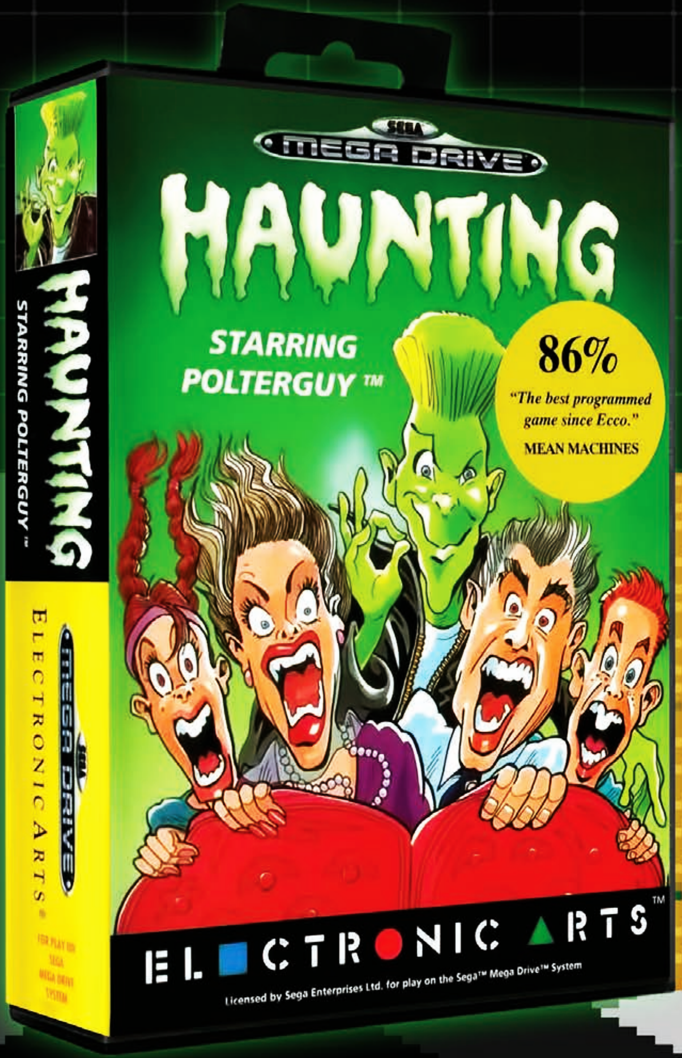
Title:
Gynoug a.k.a. Wings of Wor

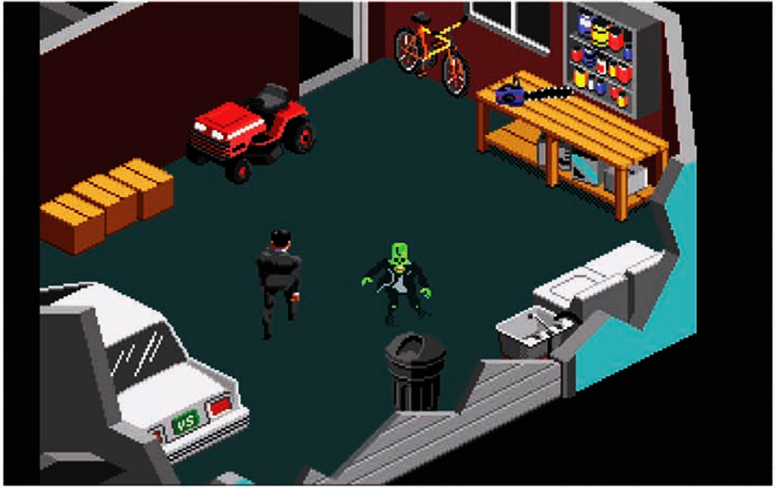
Genre:
Horizontal Scrolling Shoot’em up

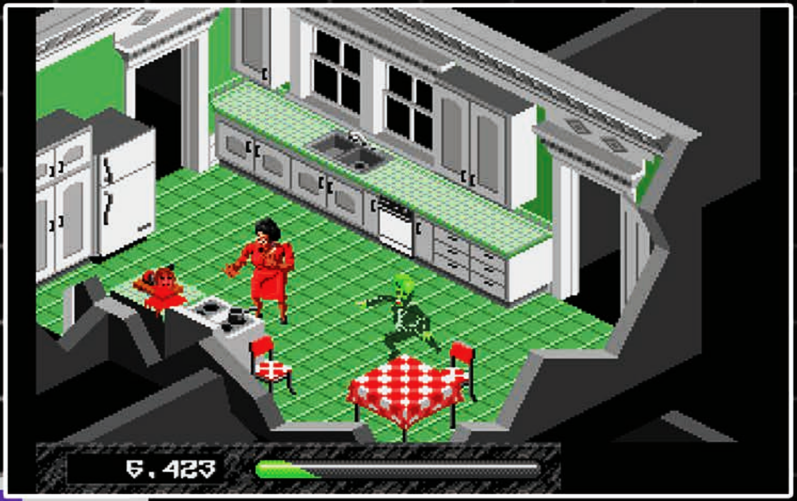
Developer:
Nippon Computer System (NCS)

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
HAUNTING
STARRING POLTERGUY ™
86%
"The best programmed game since Ecco."
MEAN MACHINES
ELECTRONIC ARTS ™
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the Sega™ Mega Drive™ System
HAUNTING
STARRING POLTERGUY ™
MEGA DRIVE
ELECTRONIC ARTS





Haunting Starring Polterguy -

You are one rebellious teenager who just enjoys skateboarding no matter what. Unfortunately, your love for skateboards ends up costing you your life since the board you got from Vito Sardini's company was defective and caused a deadly accident. You have now come back as a ghost, as a Polterguy, to terrorize the Sardini family so you can have your revenge! As Polterguy you will chase the Sardini family into four different homes and you will do whatever it takes to scare them until they run away.

In order to possess and control objects, though, you must have ectoplasm. If you run out, you will be taken to the Underworld so you can collect falling ectoplasm. Unfortunately, the Underworld is not very friendly as zombie arms, bats, and other creatures try to harm Polterguy and stop him from collecting the ectoplasm. Haunting is a surprisingly fun game because you get to play a "bad guy" that scares off a family. Chasing each of the characters out of the house is quite amusing, particularly when you see their different reactions to what is happening. Your "possession" of objects also provides for situations that are funny, gory, gruesome, or just plain absurd. Objects will have "Fright'ems" or glowing stars that let you know what object you can possess. Gameplay in the houses is enjoyable but the Underworld can get repetitive. It is also the only part of the game where Polterguy can be hurt and where the game may end. If you want to enjoy a comedy/horror game, look no further!

HAUNTING
STARRING
POLTERGUY™
©1993 Electronic Arts
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd.

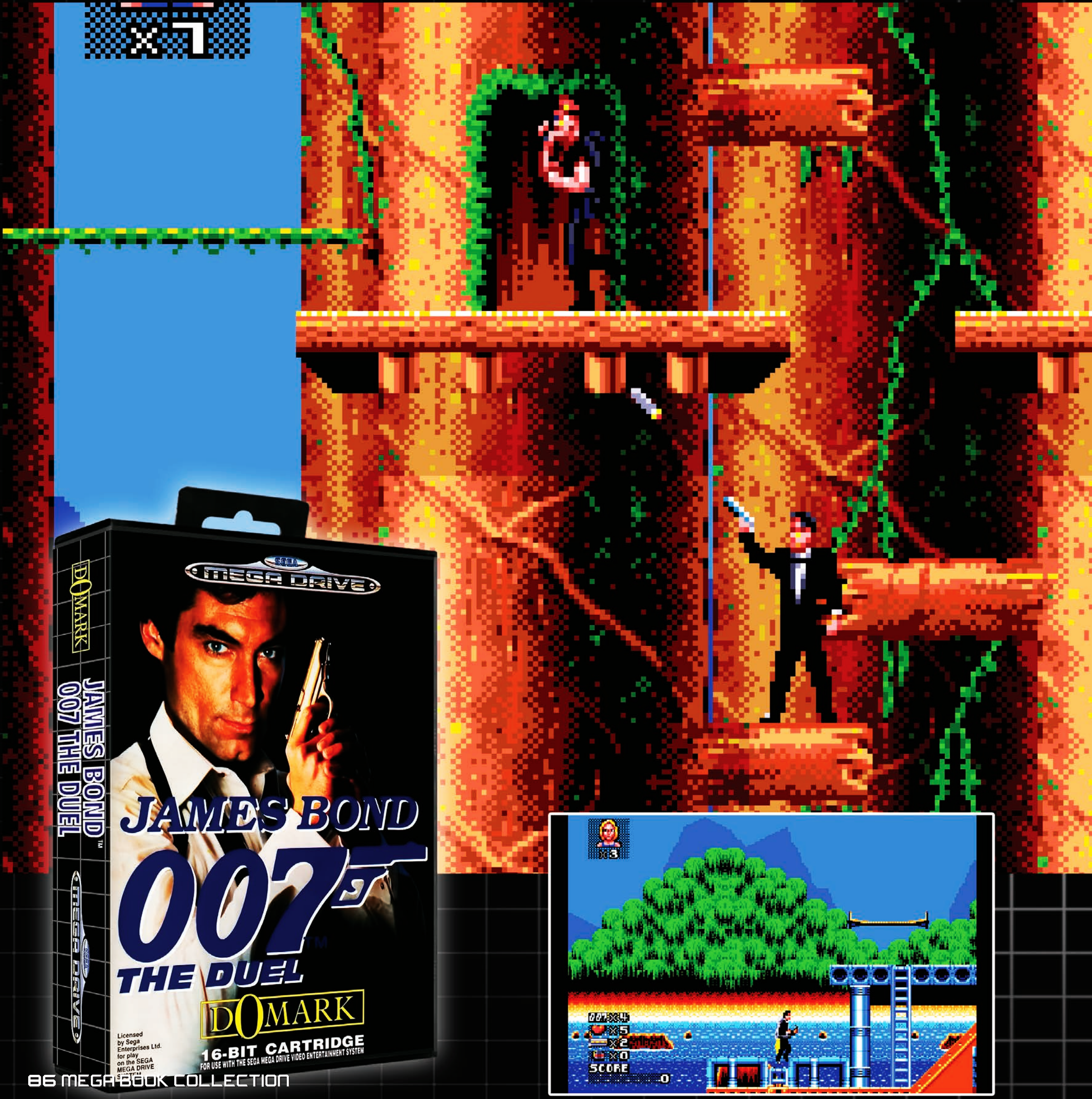
Title:
Haunting Starring Polterguy

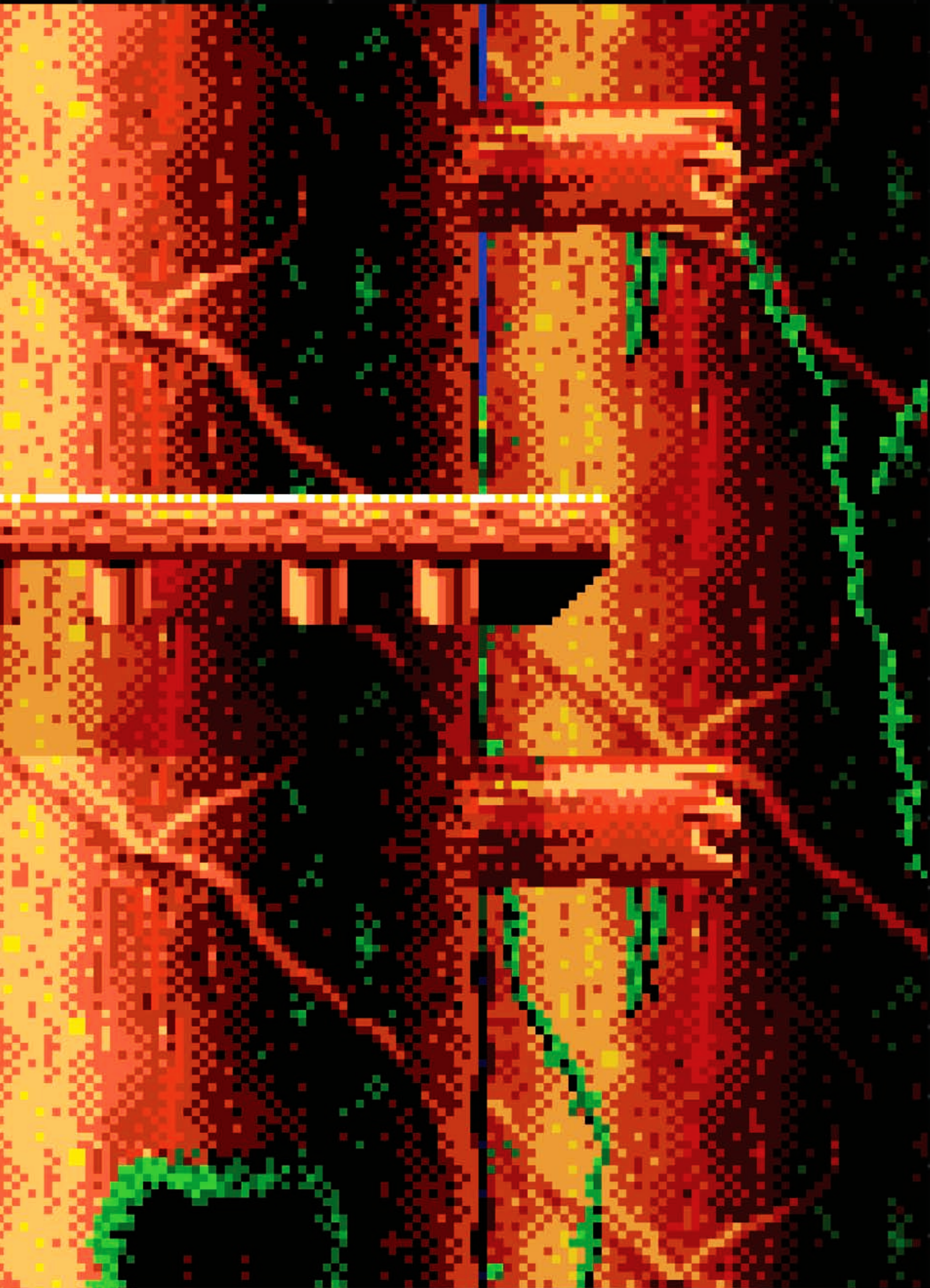
Genre:
A Haunting Action & Strategy Simulator

Developer:
Electronic Arts

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Electronic Arts

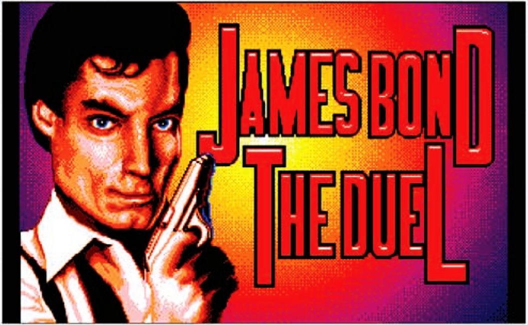

x7
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
DOMARK
JAMES BOND
007 THE DUEL
MEGA DRIVE
JAMES BOND
007
THE DUEL
DOMARK
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
x3
007x4
x5
x2
x0
SCORE
0



James Bond 007: The Duel -

The James Bond license was incredibly hot for nearly two decades during the 1990s. Even now fans still clamour for a new Bond title. But there was a time when such games were rare and James Bond 007: The Duel is one of the forgotten games in the series and I can kind of see why. Although it certainly tries to be compelling, it is let down by certain issues making it an ultimately frustrating experience. The Duel is significant in that it is one of the few Bond games to feature an original story. A mad scientist has taken over an island in the Caribbean and erected a fortress to conduct experiments. These experiments involve cloning some of 007's worst villains such as Oddjob and Jaws to help him take over the world.

The Duel marks the first time Bond starred in a side scrolling action title and was exclusive to the Mega Drive. But while it has a few good points The Duel is let down by sluggish controls and a high difficulty curve. The goal in the game is the same. Rescue a certain number of hostages, locate the bomb, and reach the exit before the bomb goes off. In some ways The Duel's pacing and mechanics are like Rolling Thunder and, if this rocks your boat, then James Bond: The Duel is worth checking out for yourself. ■



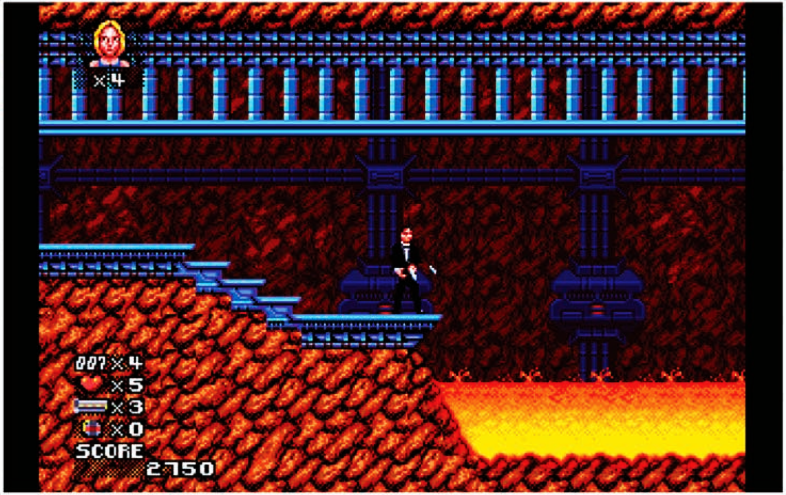
Title:
James Bond 007: The Duel

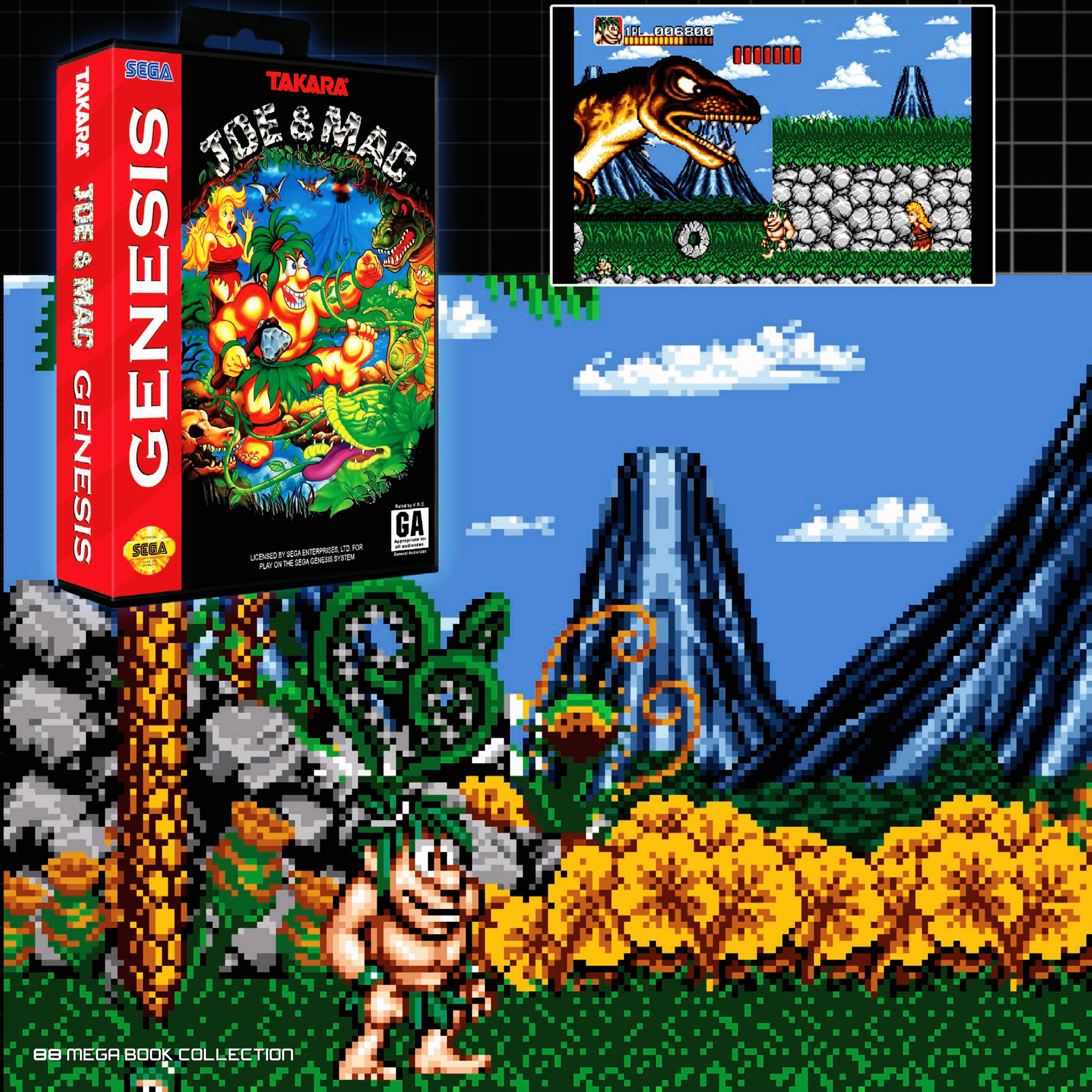
Genre:
Classic Action Platform Title

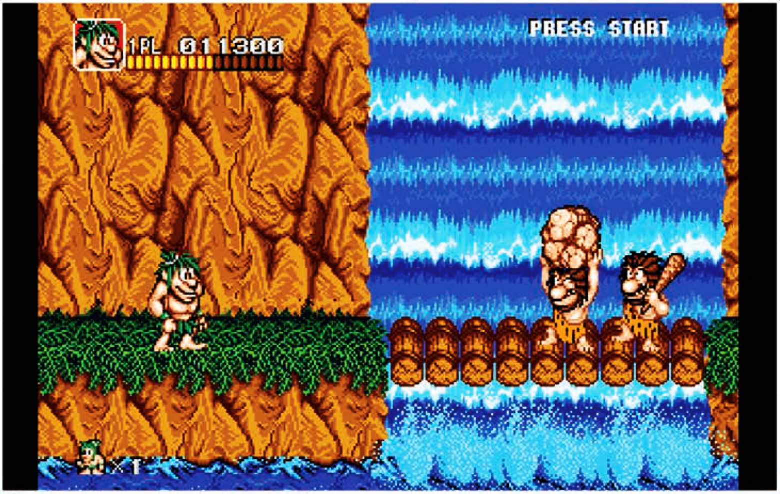
Developer:
The Kremlin

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Domark




TAKARA
SEGA
JOE & MAC
GENESIS
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA GENESIS SYSTEM
Rated by V.R.C.
GA
Appropriate for all audiences
General Audiences
1PL 006800



Joe & Mac -

Bonk's Adventure, Chuck Rock, Prehistorik Man, the Humans, we loved all of them. But Mega Drive version of Joe & Mac was an almost completely different game compared to other versions of it on existing 16-bit consoles at the time and is good when judged on its own merits but took some strange liberties in terms of what was cut and changed in this version. Released two years later in 1994, it is a faithful adaptation with all the arcade's content and game play. It is brutally difficult which is unfortunate but overall is still a great platformer for fans of the series. One detail that was changed from the arcade is your life bar: in the arcade version it is continuously trickling down as in the Adventure Island and Wonder Boy series and taking hits removed large chunks rather than instant death, but here it actually functions like a health meter plus with the abundance of food dropped is a remnant of its former status and in my opinion, it works better this way.

Joe & Mac was a graphical show piece in the arcade and Data East have managed to recreate most of what made the game look so great here. It stumbles a bit in a few areas but on the whole Joe & Mac is a great game. The humour and art direction give it a unique identity and while the journey is a bit short it is enjoyable from beginning to end. Don't pass this up. ■

JOE & MAC
(C) & TM 1991 DATA EAST CORPORATION

Title:
Joe & Mac

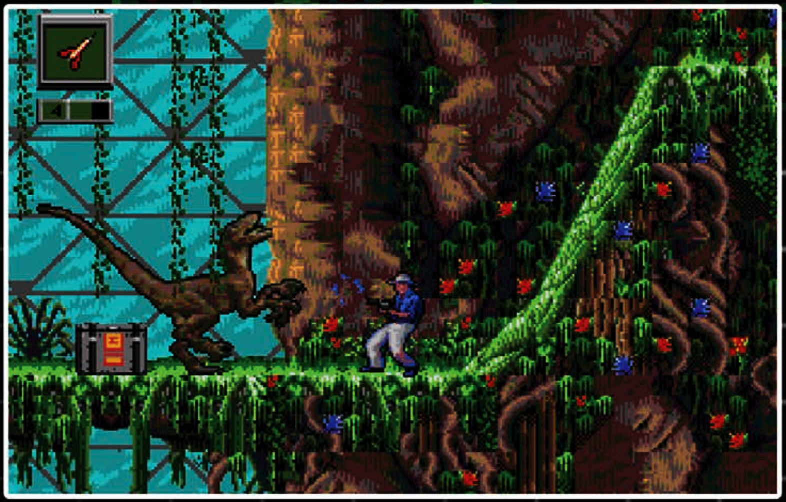
Genre:
Classic Arcade Action Platform Title

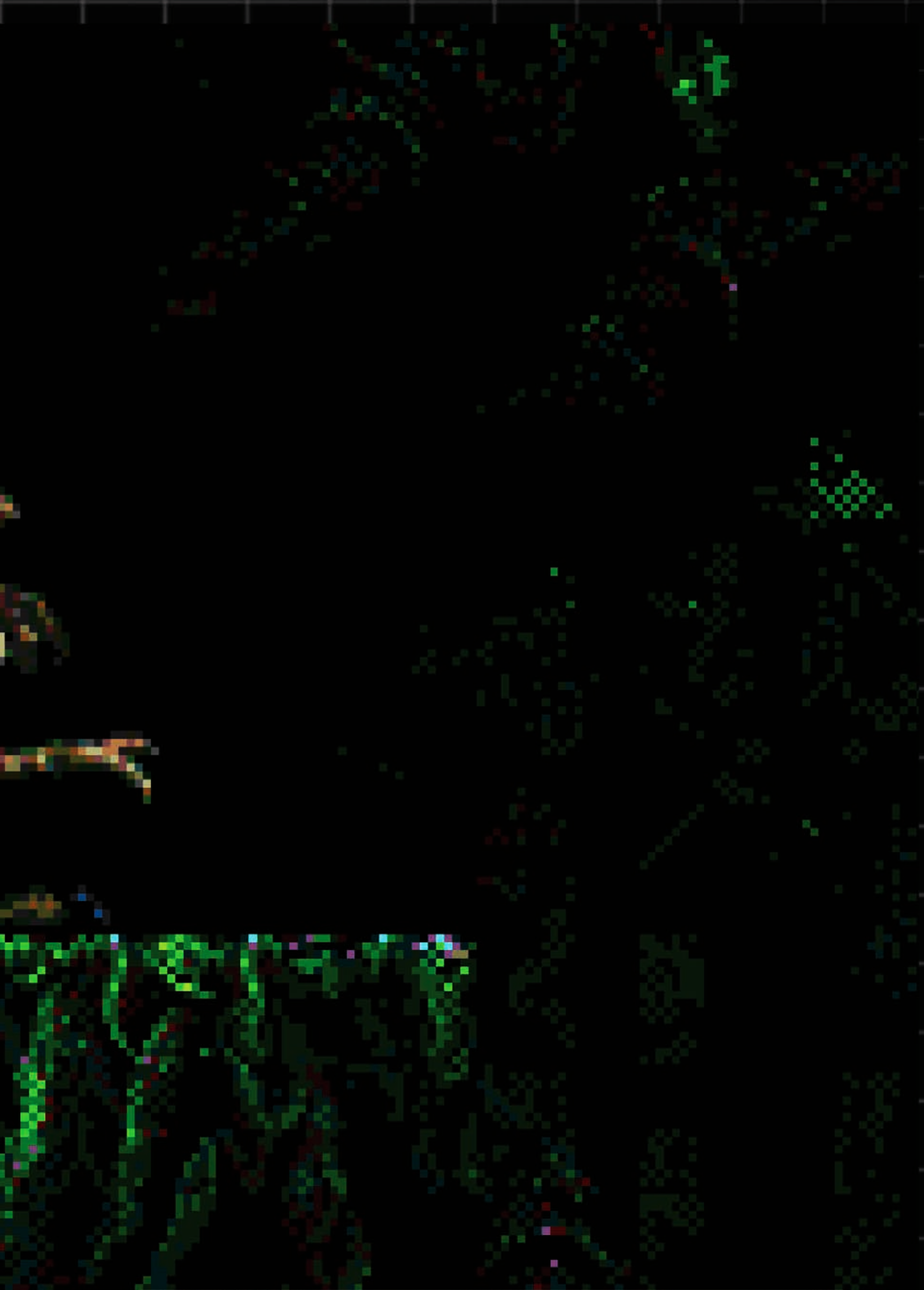
Developer:
Data East

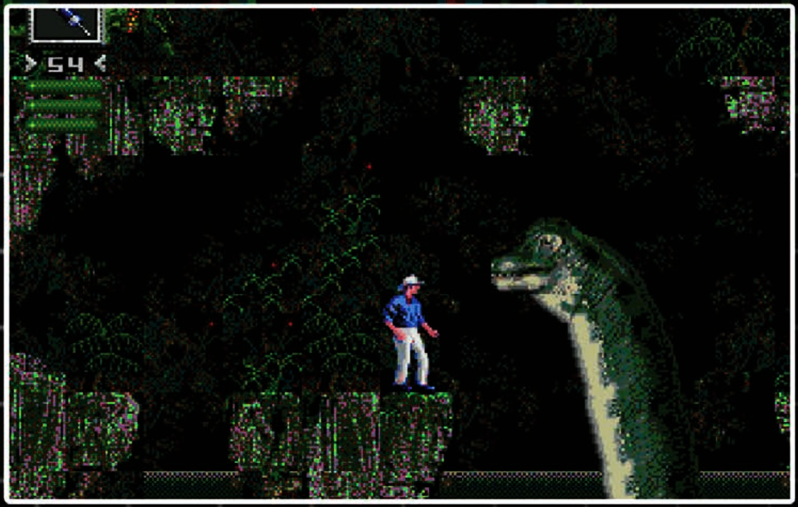
Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Takara

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
JP
JURASSIC PARK
JURASSIC PARK
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA







Jurassic Park -

Jurassic Park played a big part in my life, I even had the theme played at the church for my wedding. Now the game for the Mega Drive was different to the Mega CD version. That one had its fans as the superior game but it was really hard. If you were eight years old, loved platformers and thought Alan Grant was the coolest then this was your jam.. It followed the narrative of the film (minus Tim and Lex) with a race down the island dodging dinosaurs (with a tranquiliser gun) across a range of levels. However, remember the scene in Jurassic Park III where they are going down the rapids attacked by pterodactyls? That is in this game, as it was in the original story from the novel.

What's more, this is one of those rare exceptions where the 'water level' is actually the best part of the game for changing the technique midway through and the graphics of the waterfalls were amazing. Overall, the atmosphere is what keep you on edge the whole time. It generates right from the start menu with the T-Rex animation and the eerie soundtrack and sound effects capture that cinematic experience throughout. ■

JURASSIC PARK

Title:
Jurassic Park

Genre:
Action Adventure Platform Title

Developer:
Bluesky Software

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
KID CHAMELEON
KID CHAMELEON
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
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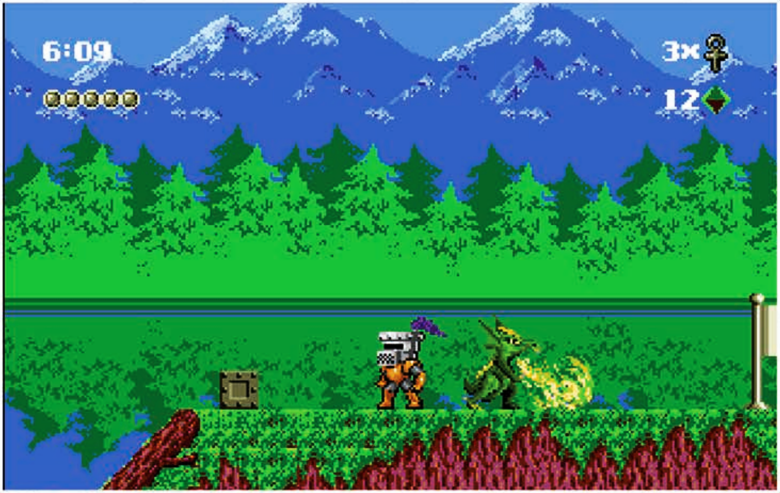
P
P



Kid Chameleon -

Kid Chameleon is one of those games you assume was one of the first on the Mega Drive/Genesis, but it was actually released post-Sonic in 1992. Don’t let the comparatively simplistic graphics fool you, there’s a complex beast beneath. There’s a new VR game at the arcade (I wish) and it’s consuming anyone who plays it (I don’t wish). Step forward possibly the only protagonist by the name of Casey you’ll ever see in a video game to bust everyone outta there. It’s a neat premise that leads to all kinds of VR-esque shenanigans. Like ESWAT, Kid Chameleon is a bit of a slow burner. The platform action is acceptable but consists of bouncing around a lot. As soon as Casey grabs a mask and morphs into whatever it represents, all hell breaks loose.

Use a helmet with horns to smash through enemies or another to morph into a cyclone: all nine masks add variety and fun to the levels. I’m probably not alone when I say Casey’s ice hockey mask outfit is my favourite and he thankfully doesn’t go full Jason/Rick from Splatterhouse on us. This is a humungous game with no battery-backup or password feature. I never got close to completing it back in the day, but it was a fun ride nevertheless. ■

START ONE
START TWO
OPTIONS
KID CHAMELEON
TM
© 1992 SEGA

Title:
Kid Chameleon a.k.a Chameleon Kid

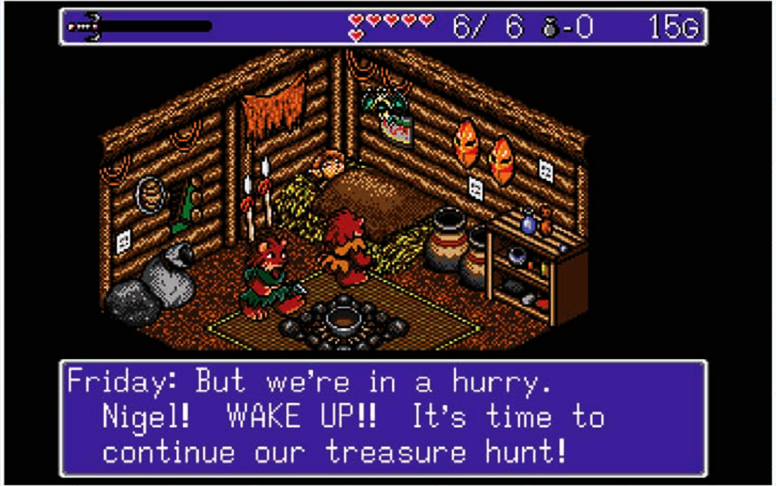
Genre:
Arcade Action Platform Title

Developer:
Sega

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
LANDSTALKER
LANDSTALKER
THE TREASURES OF KING NOLE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE



Friday: But we're in a hurry.
Nigel! WAKE UP!! It's time to
continue our treasure hunt!

Landstalker: Treasure of King Nole -

The SEGA Mega Drive may not be the first console that comes to mind when you think of RPGs, but it was home to quite a few outside of just the Phantasy Star Series, with Landstalker being just one example. An isometric action-adventure RPG platformer is certainly not something you see every day, especially back in those days. But simply being unique will only carry a game so far, so let's see how it holds up to some scrutiny, shall we? The protagonist Nigel is a seasoned thief, although he prefers the term "treasure hunter", that has just finished his most recent endeavour to amass riches. But before he can even take a break, a fairy by the name of Friday bumps into him and desperately requests help in escaping some thieves that are hot on her trail. These thieves are chasing her because they believe that she knows the whereabouts of King Nole's treasure, a trove of legendary proportions. Of course, being the treasure hunter he is, Nigel doesn't hesitate in helping her make an escape so that he just might find the treasure himself. And thus, the adventure begins…

Landstalker is much more approachable but is still full of dangers and frustration to those who are up for the challenge. These challenges are primarily due to technical limitations and a lack of handholding on the game's part. Admittedly, the light use of RPG mechanics and emphasis on Zelda-like gameplay have never been my most favourite kind of game to play, but I will always appreciate Landstalker for its unique take on the genre. ■

LANDSTALKER™
THE TREASURES OF KING NOLE
PUSH START BUTTON
© 1993 SEGA

Title:
Landstalker: Treasure of King Nole

Genre:
Classic RPG Adventure Title

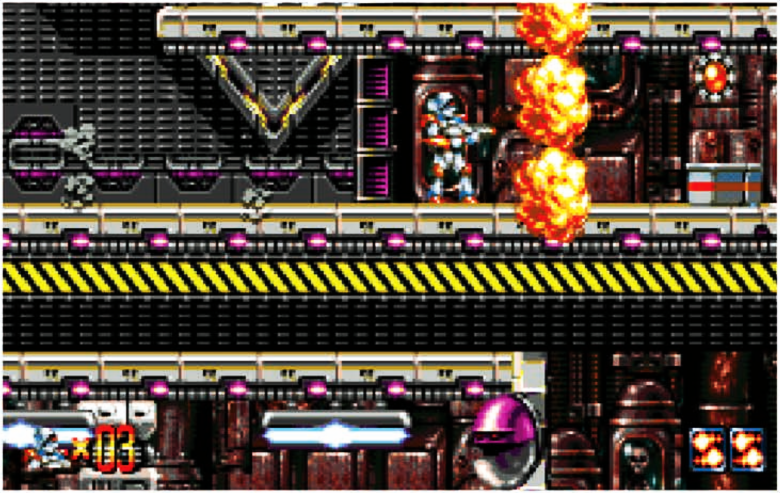
Developer:
Climax Entertainment

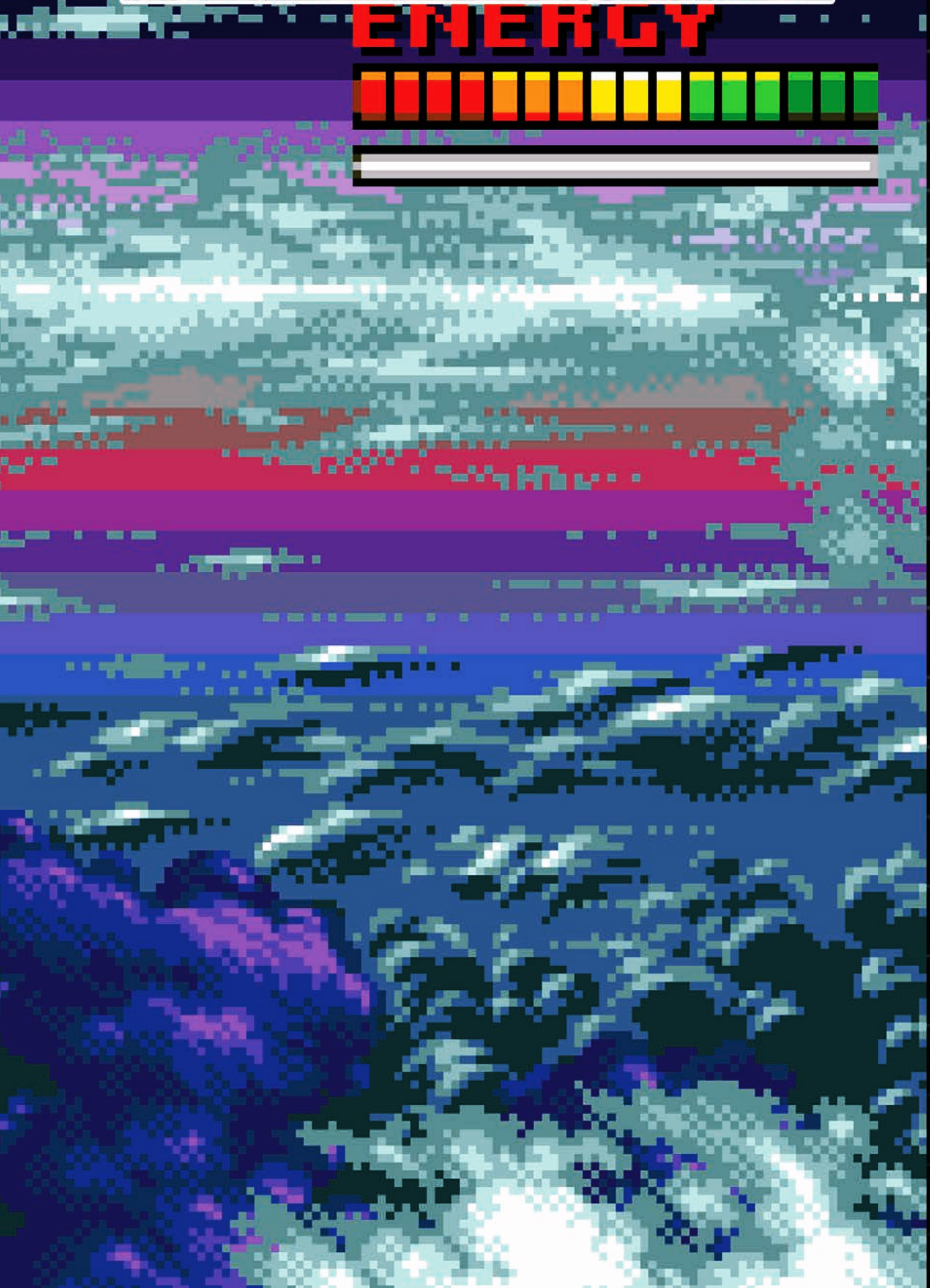
Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
SEGA

Nigel: I've got a
really bad feeling
about all this…

SEGA
MEGA TURRICAN
MEGA DRIVE
SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING
DATA EAST
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM
TIME
687





Mega Turrican -

The Machine (from Turrican II) has returned to enslave several planets, and Bren McGuire must once more don the Turrican suit to defeat it. His main fire power can be Multiple (spread), Laser or Rebound, upgraded by picking up coloured orbs; many of these can be found in hidden power blocks. Entering the invincible wheel mode, Bren can drop mines and roll around faster for a limited time (shown by an energy bar). New to this game (replacing the lightning beam) is a grappling hook similar to Bionic Commando, allowing Bren to swing between platforms and climb walls. Hidden sprites of a frozen Sonic and Mario can be found in the video memory of the first level but are never used.

Converted to Amiga and released as Turrican III, this game is separate and distinct from the SNES and NES Super Turrican games. It was later released on the Wii Virtual Console (removing references to Data East), and as part of 2020's Turrican Flashback compilation on PS4 and Switch. With high magazine rankings and rock-hard blasting gameplay it's worth checking out. ■

MEGA
TURRICAN ™
START
OPTIONS

©1994 FACTOR 5
PUBLISHED BY DATA EAST USA
LICENSED BY
SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.

Title:
Mega Turrican

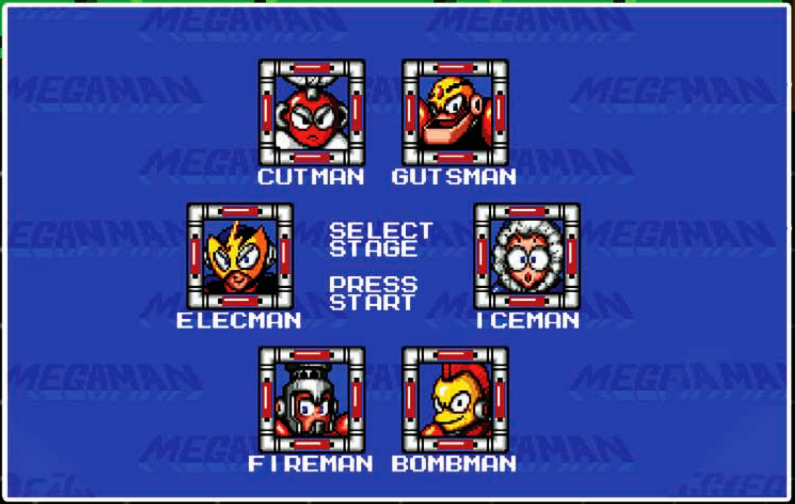
Genre:
Multi-Platform Gun'n'Run Shooter

Developer:
Factor 5 GmbH

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Data East USA, Inc.

SEGA
CAPCOM
MEGA MAN THE WILY WARS
MEGA DRIVE
CAPCOM
MEGA MAN™ THE WILY WARS
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM.
T-12046-50



MegaMan: The Wily Wars -

It's no secret that Mega Man games were among the best of the NES library, and SEGA owners never had the chance to play the games without buying Nintendo Hardware. But this game changed that. Capcom delivered the first 3 Mega Man games to the SEGA Megadrive in a glorious new art style that took advantage of the new 16-bit hardware. The tunes now had the bassy punch that only SEGA's hardware could deliver and best of all, they came on a single cartridge. When comparing Wily Wars to the original Mega Man games, there are some differences. Aside from the audio and visual upgrades, players could now save their game. This means that Mega Man 2 and 3 lost their password systems. This remastered compilation removed some bugs too , providing players with more consistent gameplay. It even featured a brand-new mode complete with exclusive bosses.

This remastered compilation also removed some bugs too, providing players with more consistent game play. It even featured a brand-new mode complete with exclusive bosses. The retail release of this game was strange at the time. It was released on a physical cartridge in Japan and Europe, the US version of the game was only available as a downloadable title from the SEGA Channel. Despite the method of release, Capcom had gifted us Mega Man in unprecedented quality. ■

MEGAMAN
THE WILY WARS

Title:
MegaMan: The Wily Wars

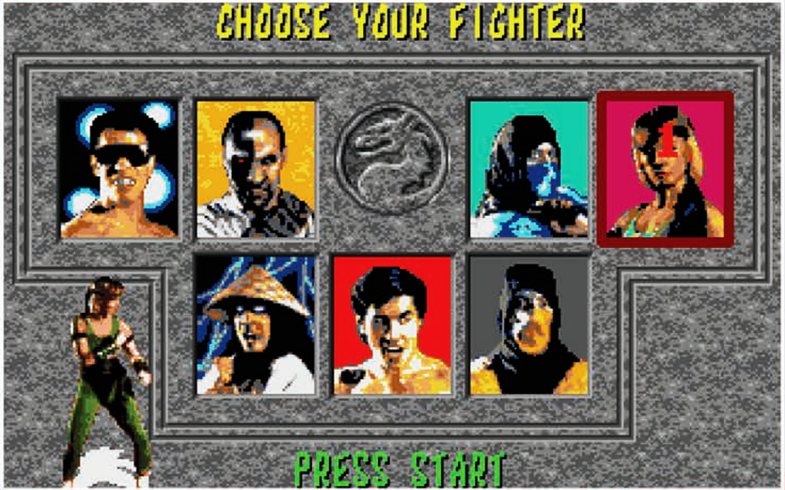
Genre:
Action Gun'n'Run Platform Title

Developer:
Capcom

Year Released:
1997

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
MORTAL KOMBAT®
ARENA
MORTAL KOMBAT
SEGA MEGA DRIVE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
ARENA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd.
for play on the SEGA MEGADRIVE SYSTEM.
T-81186-50
FIGHT



Mortal Kombat -

Ever wondered why games have age ratings? You probably haven't seen the fountains of gore in Mortal Kombat. This was arguably the most controversial game of the 16-bit era and the Megadrive version brought Mortal Kombat home with the blood intact – something that Nintendo couldn't stomach until the sequel! Graphically advanced at the time, the game used sprites captured from live actor footage and allowed players to viciously murder their opponents with secret fatalities. The actual gameplay was really solid, with extremely detailed special moves and a more mature feel that Street Fighter wished it could emulate. This game included a ton of playable characters and had playgrounds around the country (maybe even the world!) bursting with rumours of secret finishing moves and different coloured ninjas.

Some of the coolest moves in videogame history started here. Throwing ice balls that freeze opponents solid was pretty neat. If it hits, the player can walk up menacingly and deliver a devastating uppercut and it feels so satisfying. Ed Boon and the publishers at midway created an iconic fighter that still has sequels being played today. Beating your friends at videogames never felt so painfully good. ■

MIDWAY
MORTAL KOMBAT
PRESS START
COPYRIGHT ©1992 MIDWAY MANUFACTURING

Title:
Mortal Kombat

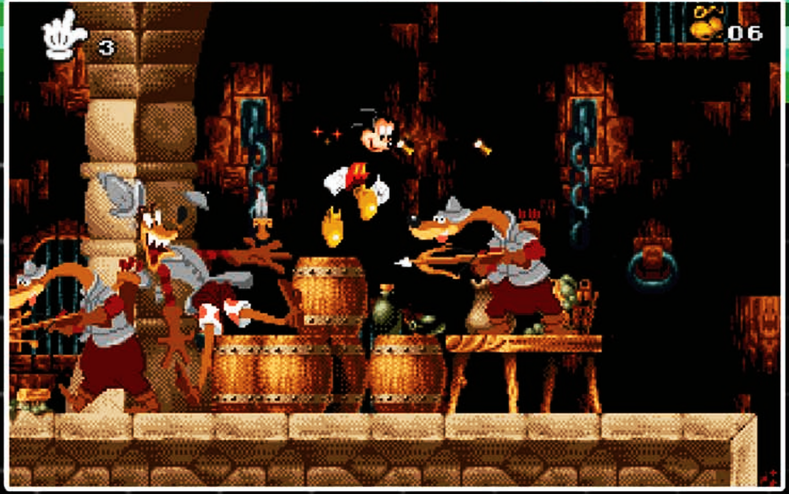
Genre:
1 Vs. 1 Gorefest Fighting Classic

Developer:
Midway Manufacturing Company

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.

3
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
MICKEY MANIA
SONY
IMAGESOFT
Disney Software
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM.
3



Mickey Mania -

The world's most famous mouse has had some wonderful animated outings over the years and this title celebrates his early greats. Mickey Mania: The Timeless Adventures of Mickey Mouse plays out some of Mickey's most recognisable cartoons from his early days right up to the most recent animated feature at the time in video game form. Mickey must journey through 6 of his classic cartoon escapades from his first appearance in 'Steamboat Willie' to 'The Prince and the Pauper', each section split into various plat-forming stages. Like the Illusion series, he can bounce on enemies or collect gold marbles to use as projectiles. The exceptional visuals look almost as if taken straight out of a golden age Disney movie and some levels experiment with effects like vignettes and pseudo-3D chase sequences.

While much easier in difficulty than other Mickey Mouse titles, it seamlessly blends the past and present, complete with voice samples of Mickey and sidekick Pluto punctuating various moments. For many players, Mickey Mania is their introduction to Mickey's first cinematic adventures and combines their simple charms with modern technology. And while the experience as a whole is shorter than its Illusion predecessors, it ensures these origins are always remembered. ■

MICKEY MANIA
PRESS START
THE TIMELESS ADVENTURES OF MICKEY MOUSE

Title:
Mickey Mania

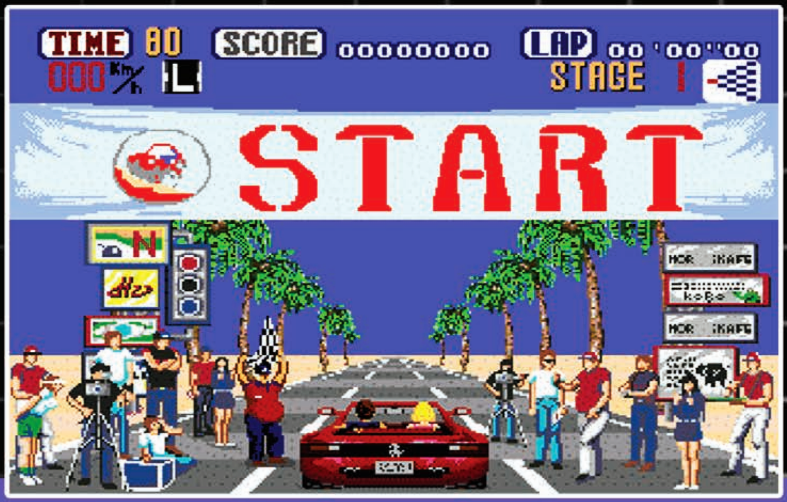
Genre:
Arcade Action Platform Title

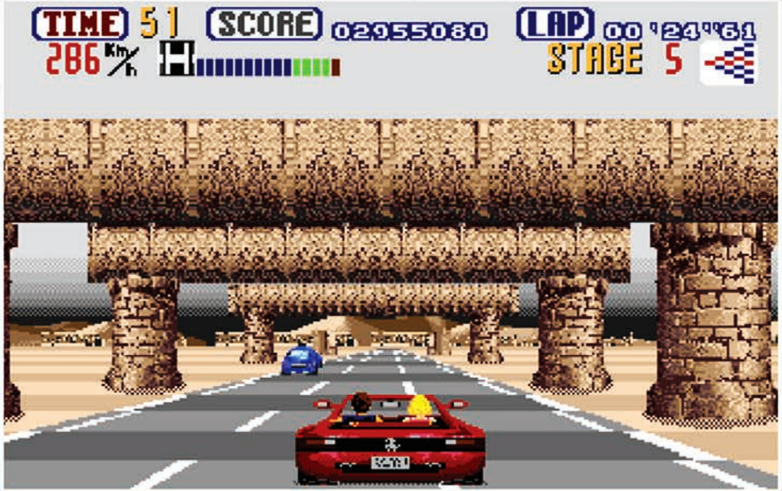
Developer:
Traveller's Tales (UK) Ltd.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sony Electronic Publishing Ltd.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
OutRun™
CALIFORNIA
OUTRUN
OutRun™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE

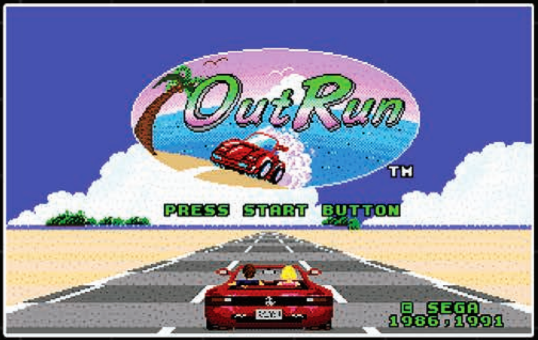

TIME 80
SCORE 00000000
LAP 00'00"00
000 Km/h
L
STAGE 1
START



Out Run -

In 1986, SEGA released one of the most influential driving games ever created. Following the success of other motorcycle racing games, legendary game designer Yu Suzuki created a new kind of driving game. Out Run was a game that featured incredible 3D graphics, non-linear game-play and selectable music, which was unheard of at the time. It made a splash in the arcade scene, and was SEGA's most successful arcade machine of the 1980's. It was faithfully ported to the Master System, Megadrive and Game Gear.

No matter the platform, Out Run is special, because players aren't driving to beat other racers. Instead, they aim to compete with the clock. Players drive a Ferrari Testarossa from the starting point to one of five locations, with the game rewarding player agency by allowing them to freely choose which location to drive to. This freedom promotes a ton of replay-ability without stereotypical arcade difficulty. After a completed run, an overhead map retraces the player's path, and rewards them with a score based on their driving. Having the opportunity to see alternative branching roads, gorgeous new environments and better scores, it's no wonder that this is one of the greats. ■



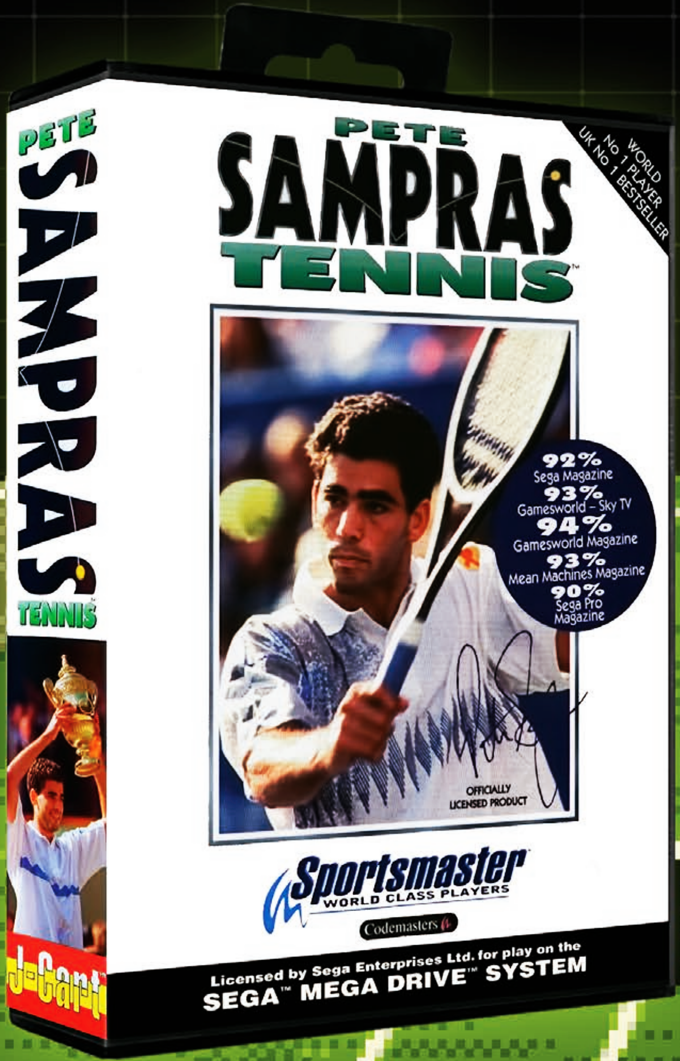
Title:
OutRun

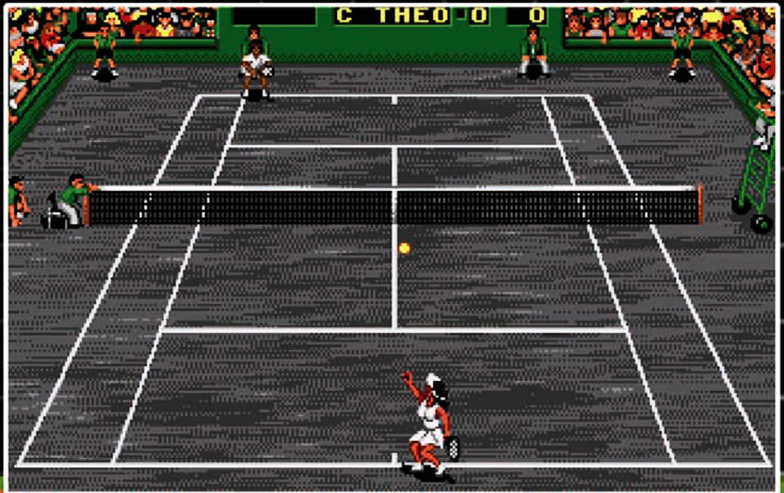
Genre:
Cross Country Driving Title

Developer:
AM R&D Dept. #2

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.


PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS
WORLD No 1 PLAYER
UK No 1 BESTSELLER
92% Sega Magazine
93% Gamesworld – Sky TV
94% Gamesworld Magazine
93% Mean Machines Magazine
90% Sega Pro Magazine
OFFICIALLY LICENSED PRODUCT
Sportsmaster
WORLD CLASS PLAYERS
Codemasters
J-Cart
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the
SEGA™ MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM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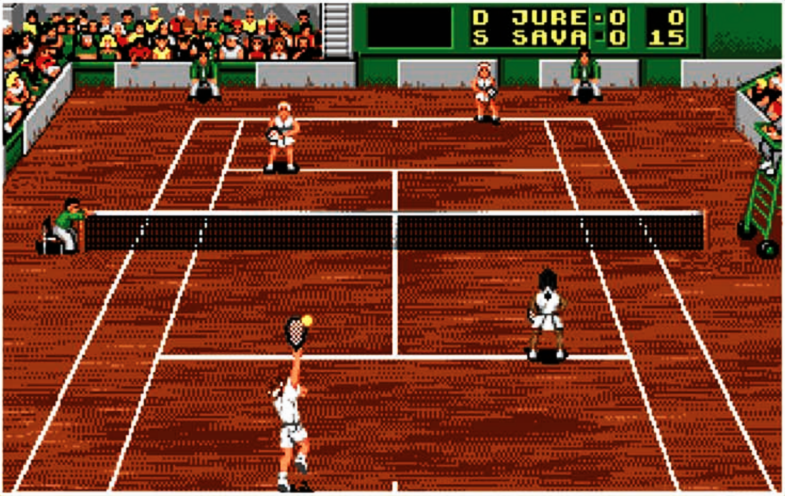
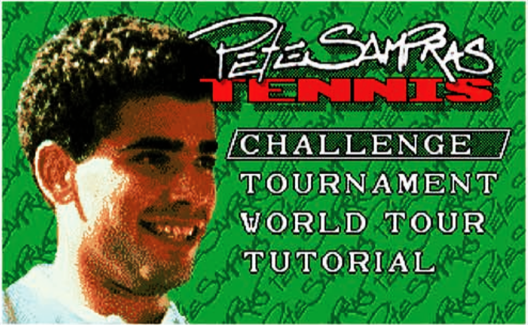


Pete Sampras Tennis -

In the early ‘90s I was obsessed with Wimbledon on the Master System, I thought it was the perfect Tennis simulation. Until this. Pete Sampras Tennis was my mainstay Blockbuster rental for at least two months. Every weekend I’d venture down there and pray no one else had nabbed it. Bar one weekend where I had to rent California Games instead it was two months of bliss. The graphics and sound design are top-notch but the reason this game was received so well back in the day is how playable it is. It punishes poor timing like pretty much every other tennis game but it’s so easy to get to grips with.

It also has an ace (see what I did there) tutorial mode, so no need for the manual. You can tackle the ‘World Tour’ with a rookie to experience the three different surface types as well as standard exhibition and tournament modes. But the cherry on top is the J-Cart. Codemasters’ innovative way of delivering 4-player action without the need for a Multi-Tap really brings the best out of this game. Just be wary of asking your neighbours if they fancy some ‘doubles action’. ■



Title:
Pete Sampras Tennis

Genre:
Celebrity Tennis Simulator

Developer:
Codemasters

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Codemasters

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
PHANTASY STAR II
6 MEGA MEMORY
A massive adventure
110 PAGE HINT BOOK INCLUDED
PHANTASY STAR II
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
HP 19
TP 15
FGHT
STGY
HP
TP

Phantasy Star II -

If you are like me it would take you decades to get around to playing this game as you think ‘oh it is a sequel’ I should play the original first after all it is an RPG. Well, you would be wrong and denying yourself a great opportunity as a time-line wise there are about a 1000 years between the two games. The mechanics of the perfect RPG are all in this game, the decisions you make, the companions and equipment you choose for the journey. It is futuristic and yet finds a balance to be a mythical quest. If you ever want to demonstrate to a friend or family member how retro gaming can be just as rewarding as anything new today this is the game you should encourage them to play.

We won’t give too much of the plot away here but the mechanics work in a way that is very recognisable today in games such as Pokemon (but don’t let that put you off). The best news is that its legacy has endured and if this is new to you it has been ported to many modern consoles so go check it out and you won’t be disappointed. Phantasy Star II is a very special part of the Megadrive / Genesis collection and is very much held in high regard by fans. ■

PHANTASY STAR II
TM
© SEGA 1989

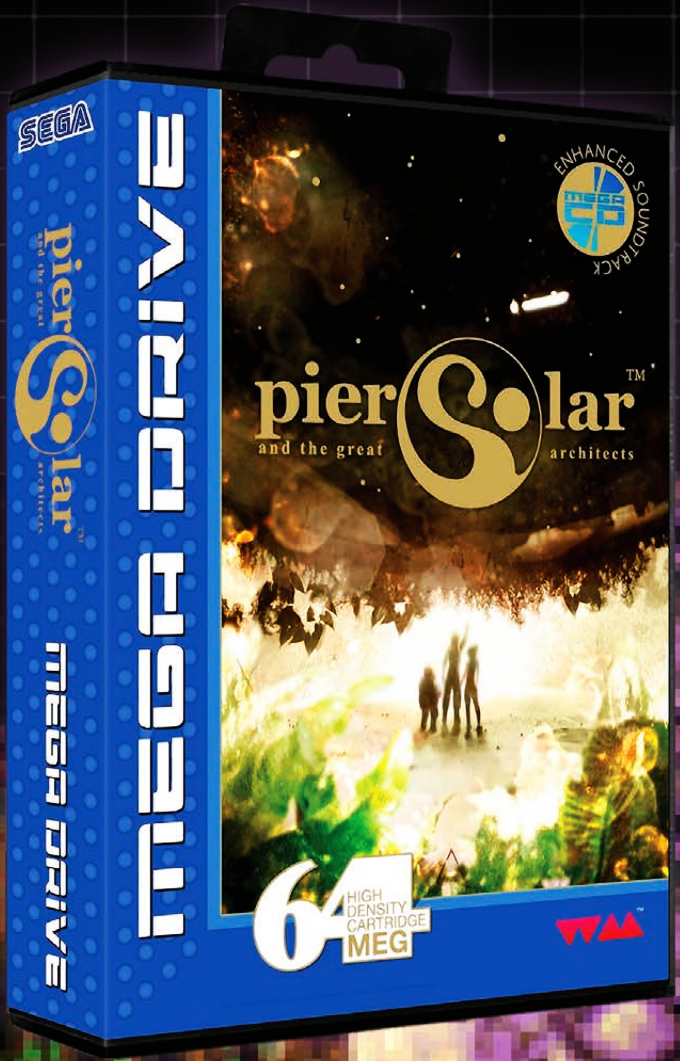
Title:
Phantasy Star II

Genre:
Futuristic RPG of a Classic Series

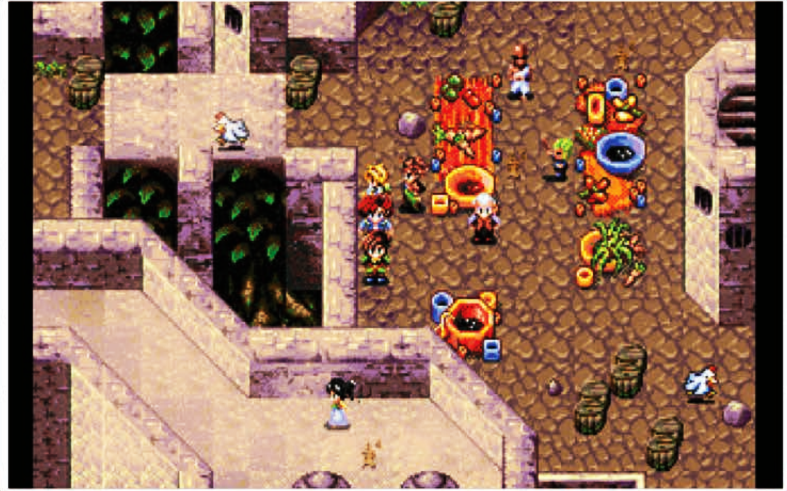
Developer:
Sega

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
pier Solar and the great architects
ENHANCED SOUNDTRACK
MEGA CD
64 MEG
HIGH DENSITY CARTRIDGE

121
79
1
133
186
44
216
34



Pier Solar -

and the Great Architects

Hoston wakes up to find his father ill in bed. Only a special herb that grows deep in the forest nearby can cure him but there are dangers in the forest. Despite being warned, Hoston with his friends Alina and Edessot, head into the forest to find the herb. Reaching a weird garden, the herb is found and the town's captain reaches them to take the herb to Rudy, Hoston's father. Rudy gets well in a day but then they discover that Alina has run away. Hoston, Edessot, and Rudy must find her. When they do, the run into a Goaman (a centaur) and an armored warrior named Ironhart. This is when the group learns of Pier Solar and the Architects and this is where the adventure starts.

Pier Solar is an extensive RPG game for the Genesis/MD that fans of RPG's are sure to enjoy. The game allows the player to use a "gather" system in which skills and magic can be shared between characters. This is something that makes the game a bit easier and will be helpful to those not used to this type of game. Pier Solar has some really beautiful graphics and some good music but the latter gets even better if you own a Sega/Mega CD and you have the enhanced soundtrack to play along with your Pier Solar cartridge. The score is just beautiful and there are even some additional sound effects included with the CD. Pier Solar is very well done and an excellent RPG for the Genesis/MD. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game. ■

pier Solar™
and the great
architects
Press START!
Pier Solar, ©WaterMelon 2010

Title:
Pier Solar and the Great Architects

Genre:
Fantasy Action RPG Title

Developer:
Watermelon

Year Released:
2010

Publisher:
Watermelon

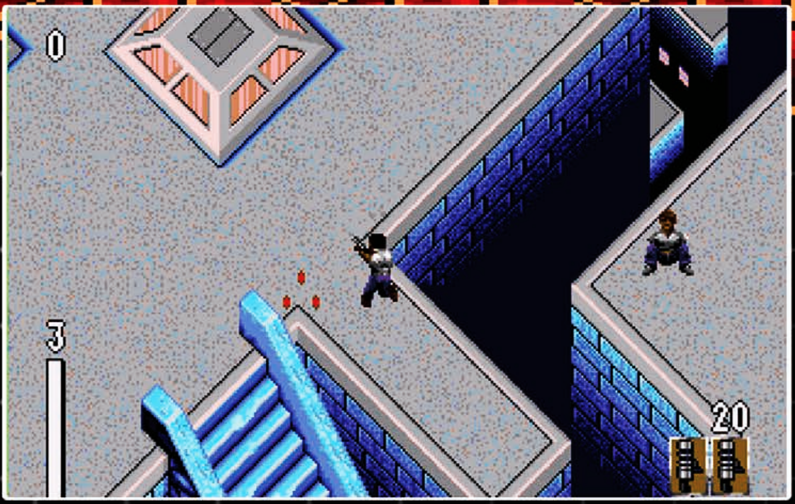
1000
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
PREDATOR 2™
ARENA ENTERTAINMENT
PREDATOR 2
MEGA DRIVE
ARENA ENTERTAINMENT™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGADRIVE SYSTEM.
T-81076-50
0
HELP
3

Predator 2 -

Predator 2 was interesting for a number of reasons. After the testosterone filled jungle adventure of the first movie the setting was changed to the streets of Los Angeles. The “Urban Jungle” if you will, yet there was less of the Predator stalking and killing its victims and more of people sweating profusely as they tried to track it down. But one could always hope the game would turn out better, right? Yet somehow with a ton of action it is overall a mediocre affair. Predator 2 was exclusive to the Mega Drive on the 16-bit battle ground for the time and is a top-down shooter. For the most part the controls are simple and responsive. You can move in eight directions as well as lock your fire to strafe enemies. There are a few secondary weapons such as a shotgun, machine gun, and bombs.

The object of each stage is to rescue a set number of hostages and find the exit. Arrows will guide you to the nearest person that needs help, but you have to be quick. If you wander aimlessly or take too long the Predator will target the closest hostage. Depending on the difficulty level you can only afford so many before it is an automatic game over. There are occasional boss battles to break things up but saving hostages is the main focus. Predator 2 came close to being a good game. But the lack of polish that came from the game’s development made it for the fan base rather than the average gamer.

PREDATOR 2
TM



Title:
Predator 2

Genre:
Isometric Arcade Action Title

Developer:
Perfect Entertainment

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Arena Entertainment

KONAMI
PROBOTECTOR
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM.
T-95106-50

1P =02 SHOT·I
A B C D
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2P =02 SHOT·I
A B C D
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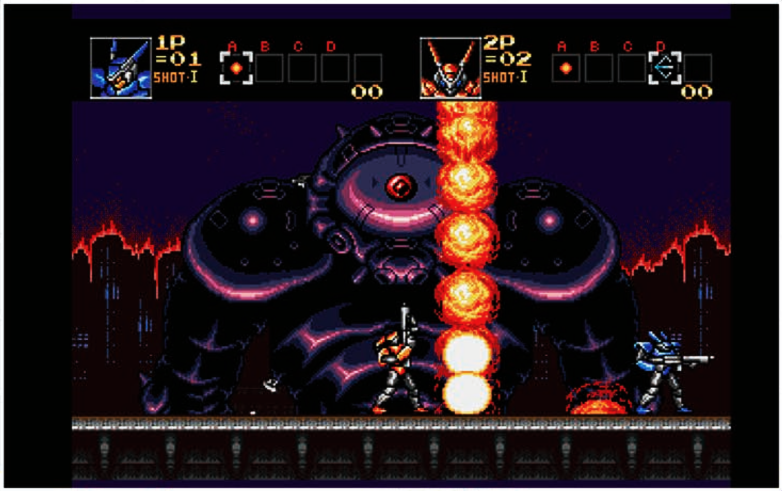
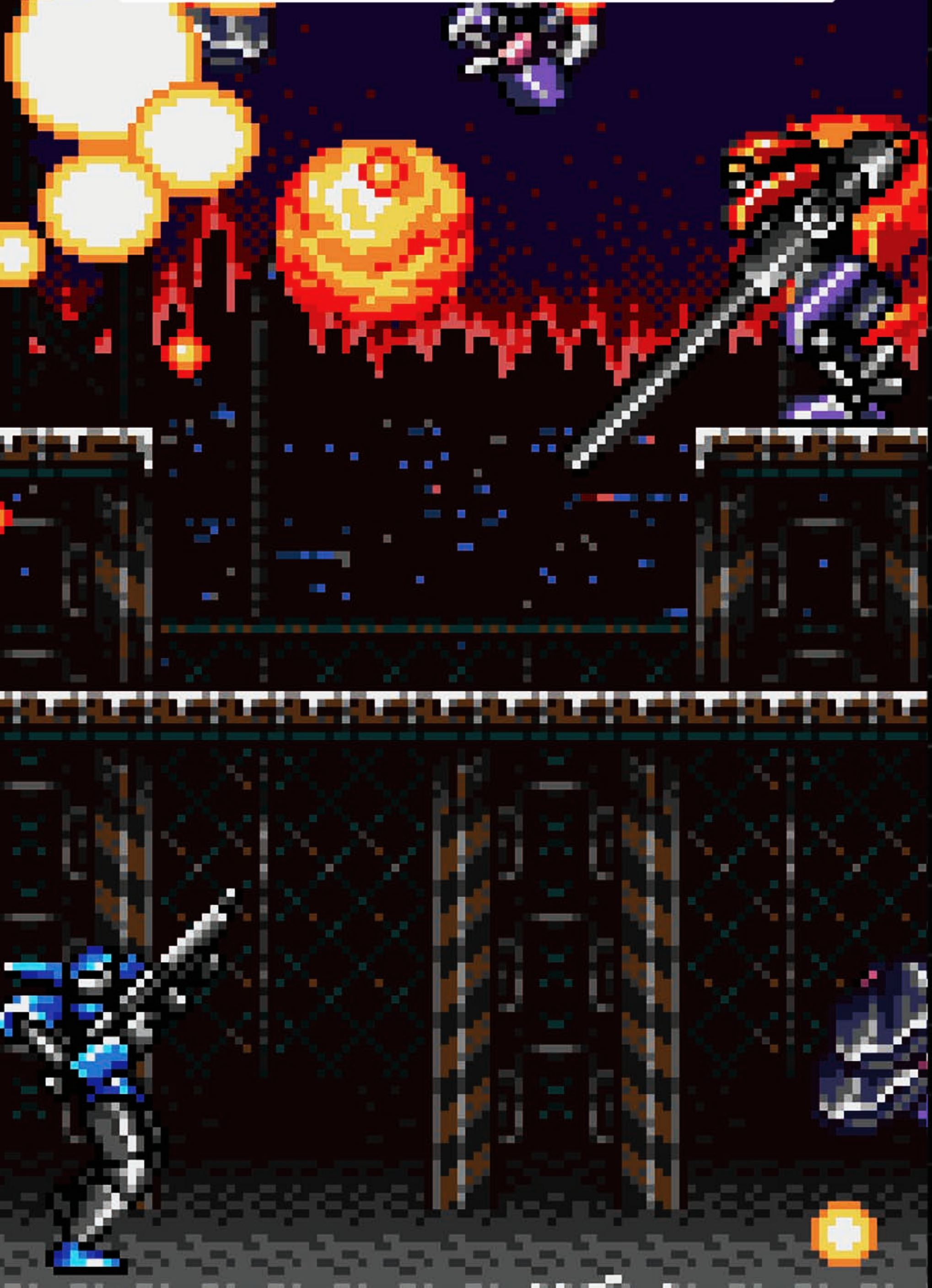




Probotector -

Contra is a series with historical roots in the arcade and while various sequels had made their way onto other systems after the coin-op release, it wasn't until 1994 that we saw a game from the franchise on a Sega console. With the Mega Drive's Probotector, Konami added a colourful cast of playable characters, each with their own set of weapons and unique attributes. Playing Probotector for the first time was quite an experience, even for seasoned Contra heads. Each stage presented its own challenge, almost entirely different to the previous, meaning you were forced to adjust your approach on the fly in order to react to a mechanic change, new enemy type or environmental hazard. The introduction of branching paths alongside the roster additions increased the games replay value significantly with players keen to experience the stages they had skipped on previous runs.

Contra is a series synonymous with its difficulty and all versions of the game stay true to these values. The Japanese version provides a 3 level health bar making things less stressful while presenting a more balanced challenge than the western releases, which are, maybe, a little too unforgiving. Whichever version you play, Probotector sits high in the list of 'best ever' Contra titles and is one of the Mega Drive's greatest action games.

PROBOTECTOR®
1 PLAYER
2 PLAYERS
OPTIONS
©1994 KONAMI ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Title:
Probotector A.K.A. Contra: Hard Corps

Genre:
Classic Alien Action Gun'n'Run

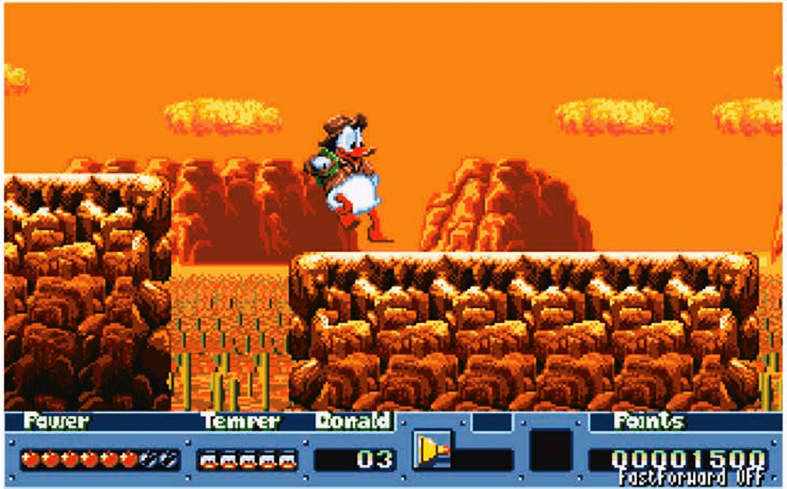
Developer:
Konami

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Konami

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
QUACKSHOT
STARRING DONALD DUCK
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE

Power
Temper
Donald
03
Points
00028500



Power
Temper
Donald
Points
03
00001500
FastForward OFF

QuackShot - Starring Donald Duck

Quackshot is another Disney adventure. Featuring Donald Duck, he finds a treasure map and basically decides that he's Indiana Jones and sets out to find the treasure of King Garuzia, only for Big Bad Pete to interfere and fill the levels with his minions. The game is not too difficult overall but it is prone to several problems. There are several impossible jumps that will damage you, and lots of enemies have a tendency to materialise in the space you're occupying, immediately damaging you, and some sections will leave you praying that the next enemy you encounter will drop a chicken for you to devour.

The main weapon is a plunger gun which can't kill enemies, merely stunning them allowing you to pass, at least until you acquire some popcorn or gum, which has limited uses. The soundtrack is quite catchy, with some of the sound effects lifted directly from Castle of Illusion, which is good as you'll find yourself backtracking through levels quite a bit, having Donald's nephews whisk him between levels to collect key items to progress further into the game. This is a good example of Disney; they really produced quality content for the Mega Drive and Quackshot is a stand-out example. ■

QUACKSHOT™
STARRING
Donald Duck
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1991 The Walt Disney Company
© 1991 SEGA Enterprises, LTD

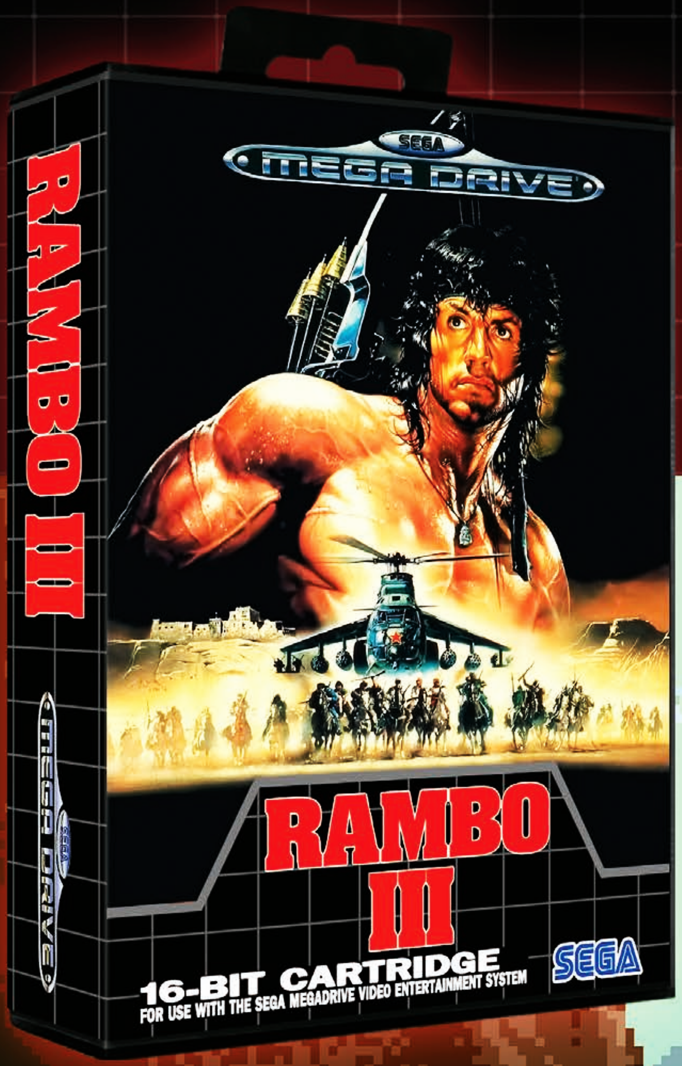
Title:
QuackShot - Starrinf Donald Duck

Genre:
Action Adventure Platform Title

Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
RAMBO III
RAMBO
III
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

TOP
338550
12
BOMB
14
x4
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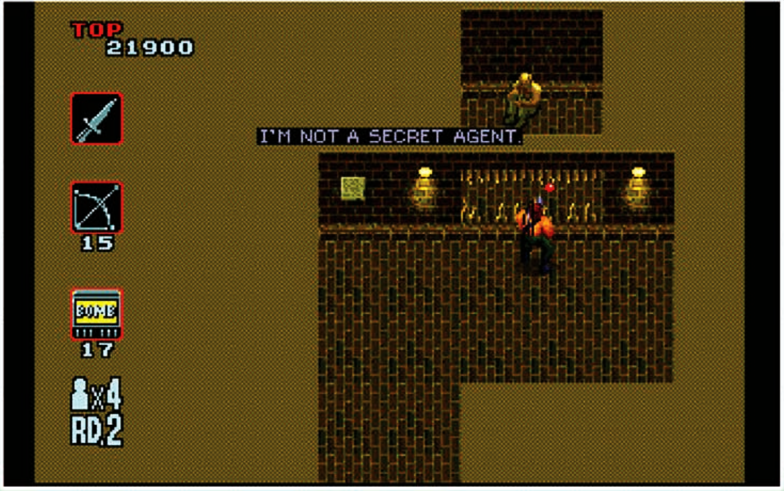
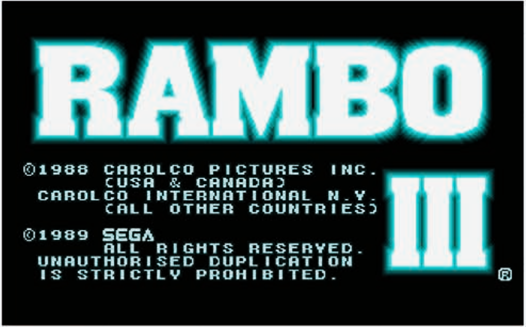


I'M NOT A SECRET AGENT.

Rambo III -

Colonel Trautman has a new mission in Afghanistan, helping the Mujahedeen freedom fighters against a repressive Russian invasion. He aims to assemble an elite team to accompany him, and John Rambo is top of the list. The mission soon turns to disaster as Trautman is captured by the Russians, led by Colonel Zaysen. The action in Rambo III loosely follows the film plot. It starts with an attempt to infiltrate the Russian fort then on to destroying artillery units and weapon caches before reaching the 6th and final level and rescuing Trautman. Boss battles occur at the end of levels 1, 3, 5 and 6 and take on a different viewpoint.

Rambo is equipped with a knife, a machine gun with unlimited ammo, explosive arrows and time bombs. Each of these are particularly useful at various stages. A useful trait when using the machine gun is that, when stood still, Rambo will spray his bullets slightly. The perspective throughout the game is kind of half way between top down and side on, a bit like Mercs or Ikari Warriors, and manages to fit a lot of action on the screen. The graphics are ok but the fact that the game is set in the sparse landscape of Afghanistan means the developers have had to be a little more imaginative in other areas. It is fun to keep trying though and enemy positions can be memorised. There is a rewarding longevity in short bursts with Rambo III as it's a good dose of hectic action. I'd recommend it if you're a fan of the genre. ■



RAMBO III ®

©1988 CAROLCO PICTURES INC.
(USA & CANADA)
CAROLCO INTERNATIONAL N.V.
(ALL OTHER COUNTRIES)
©1989 SEGA
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UNAUTHORISED DUPLICATION
IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

Title:
Rambo III

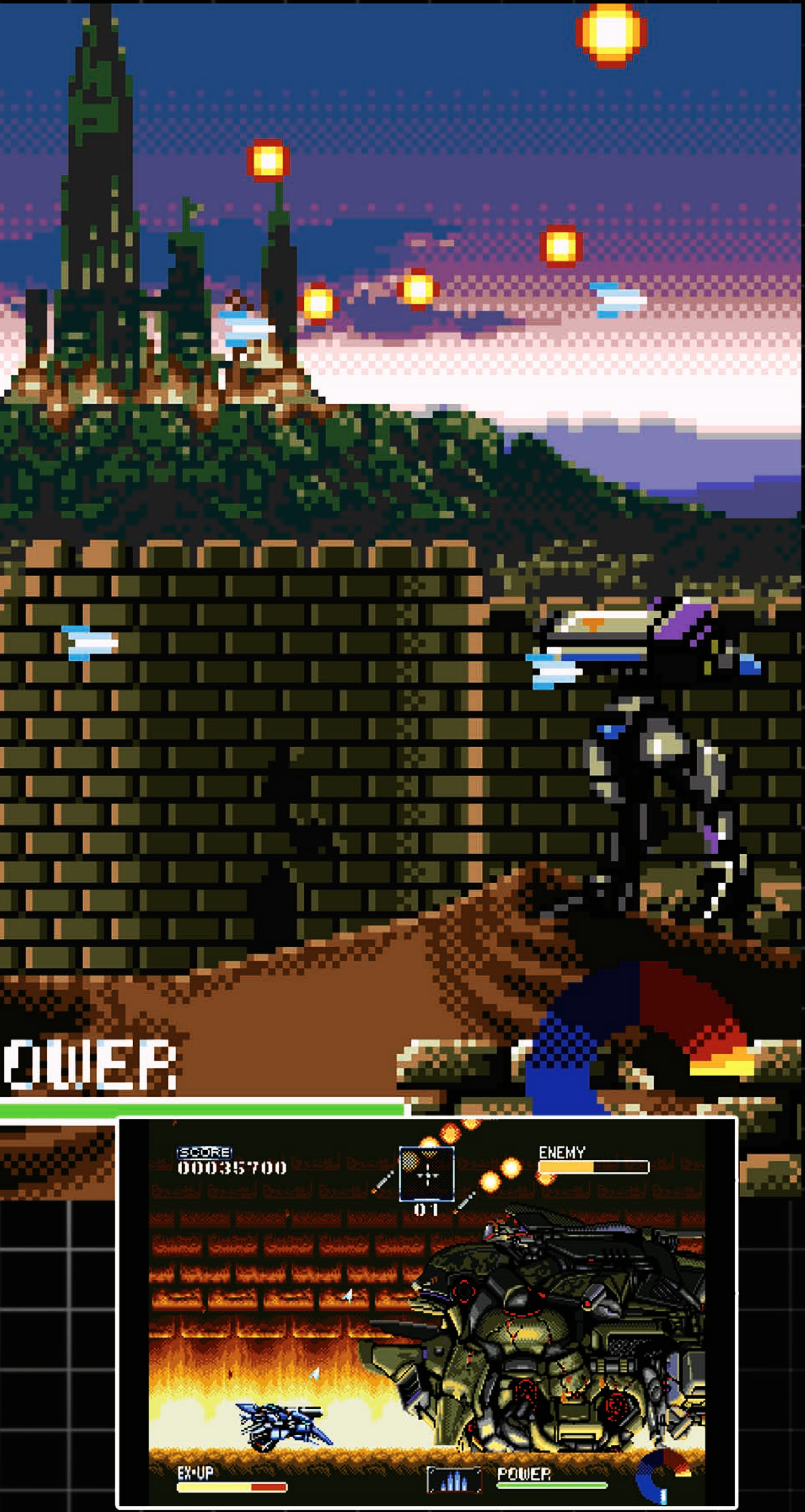
Genre:
Isometric Arcade Movie-Tie-In Action Title

Developer:
Sega

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
RANGER X
RANGER X
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
SCORE
00061200
09
RANGER-X
POWER



Ranger X -

I wasn't massively into 'run and gun' games growing up. My Master System library was full of platformers and average sport sims: I'd never even heard of Contra. And then I got my Mega Drive. Included in the bundle was Ranger X. A game I'd read about but never had the chance to play. I played it and never looked back. Ranger X has all the ingredients necessary: lots of guns; lots of enemies; bosses that take up multiple screens; but it also has a pace and variety I haven't seen in any other run and gunner.

The game flits effortlessly between all-out carnage and slower exploration. Special weapons need to be recharged in bright light, so you must use them wisely especially in the underground levels. In the more open levels, you can use your motorbike to unleash hell on the forces of Rahuna. If you've got a 6-button joypad the bike can be moved independently to attack ground targets while you fly around the screen obliterating everything else. The soundtrack is one of the best on the 16-bit and the boss music still gives me heart palpitations. Ranger X is a very special game that didn't get the recognition it deserved when it was released. Give it a go, especially if you enjoy a challenge. ■

RANGER-X
TM
© 1993 SEGA
GAU ENTERTAINMENT

Title:
Ranger X

Genre:
Arcade Action Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Gau Entertainment

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
THE REVENGE OF SHINOBI™
THE REVENGE OF
SHINOBI™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
LIFE
-000
-2

SEGA MEGA DRIVE

The Revenge of Shinobi -

Thinking back, I honestly can't remember how I got to own my original The Revenge of Shinobi cartridge. I've since replaced it with a Japanese version, but I don't actually recall buying my PAL copy, yet somehow the game found its way into my collection and became a backdrop to my glorious memories of summer 1991. The appeal of Revenge was that it resembled an Arcade game. Its large sprites and gritty aesthetic wouldn't have looked out of place alongside some of the best coin-ops of the era. To accompany the game's arcade quality visuals, Yuzo Koshiro delivered one of the defining soundtracks of the era. Themes like "The Shinobi" and "China Town" were comparable to some of the best mainstream dance anthems of the time - a remarkable feat given the technology.

Before Revenge's release, I often wondered why Sega hadn't ported the original Shinobi coin-op to its flagship console. Little did I know that they were aiming for something that exceeded those heights and elevated the bar in terms of 16-bit game design and presentation. Alongside stellar ports of Strider and Ghouls 'n Ghosts, The Revenge of Shinobi was one of the Mega Drive titles that helped to convey the message that Sega were, indeed, bringing the arcade home. ■

The Revenge of
SHINOBI

Title:
The Revenge of Shinobi

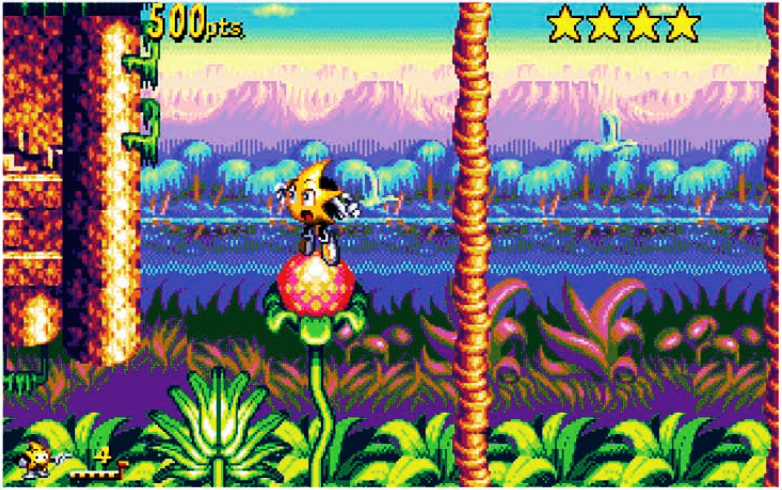
Genre:
Classic Arcade Ninja Action Title

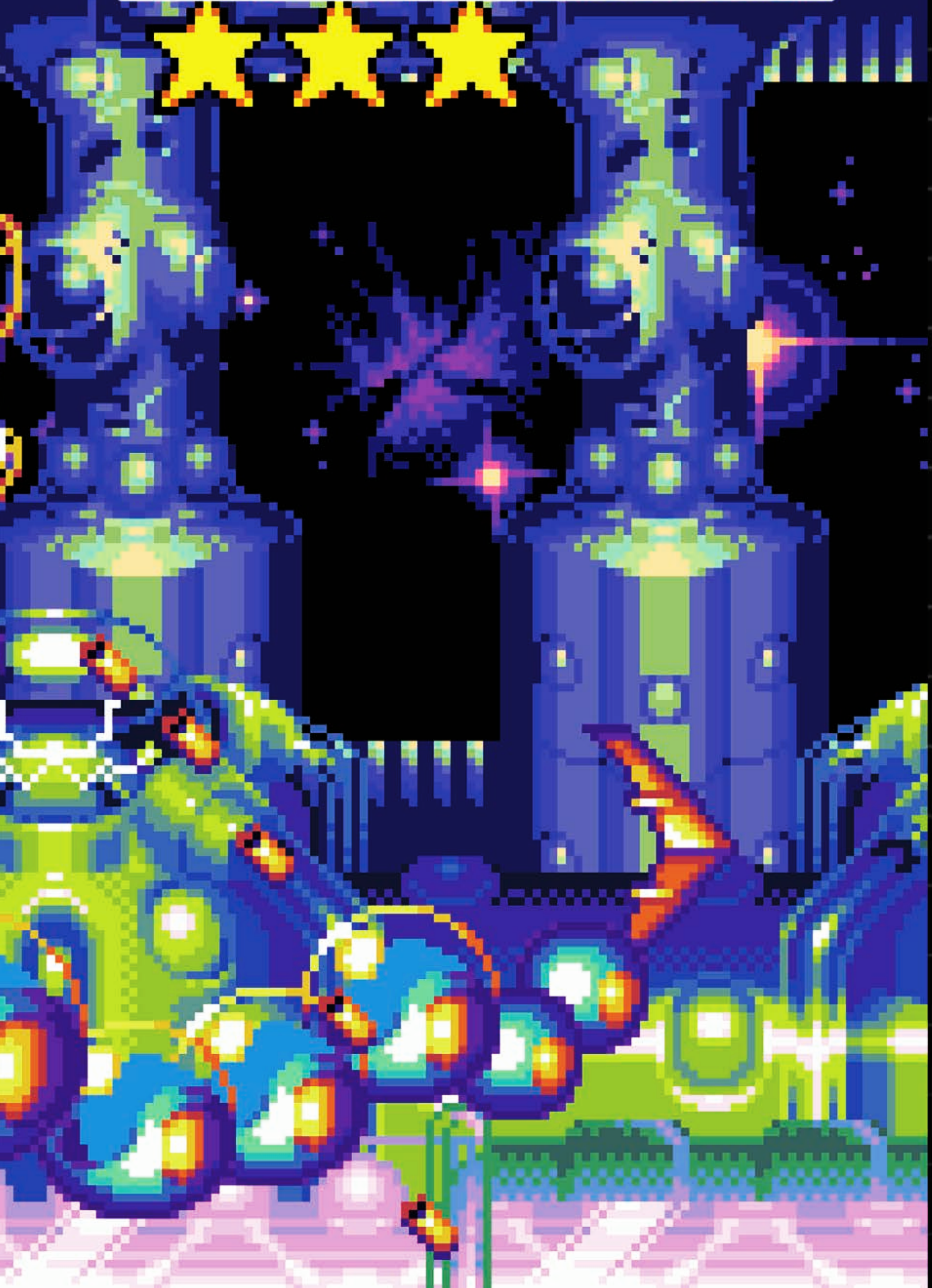
Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
Ristar
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA
0pts.
pts





Ristar: The Shooting Star -

Ristar, a character we haven't seen since this game and I've no idea why. In all honesty, I only played this game for the first time about five years ago. Being one of the later Mega Drive titles it passed a lot of us by. On the face of it it's just another 16-bit platformer in the same mould as Sonic the Hedgehog – it's quick (but not super-fast), colourful and the protagonist has a touch of arrogance about him. But the platforming action is definitely more hands on. Our Ristar loves headbutting bad guys.

The son of the world's hero (as the plot loosely goes) is here to save the world. And he's an anthropomorphic star. His penchant for grabbing means he can grab ladders, ledges, weird spinning things, odd gadgets that make people happy, the world's his oyster. Talking of oysters, Ristar has the best underwater levels I've ever played. Why? The fact he has no lungs (being a star an all) means there's no annoying air countdown and the sheer panic it brings. Excellent level design, interesting bosses, a great soundtrack and a fair challenge makes this the perfect platformer. ■

Title:
Ristar: The Shooting Star

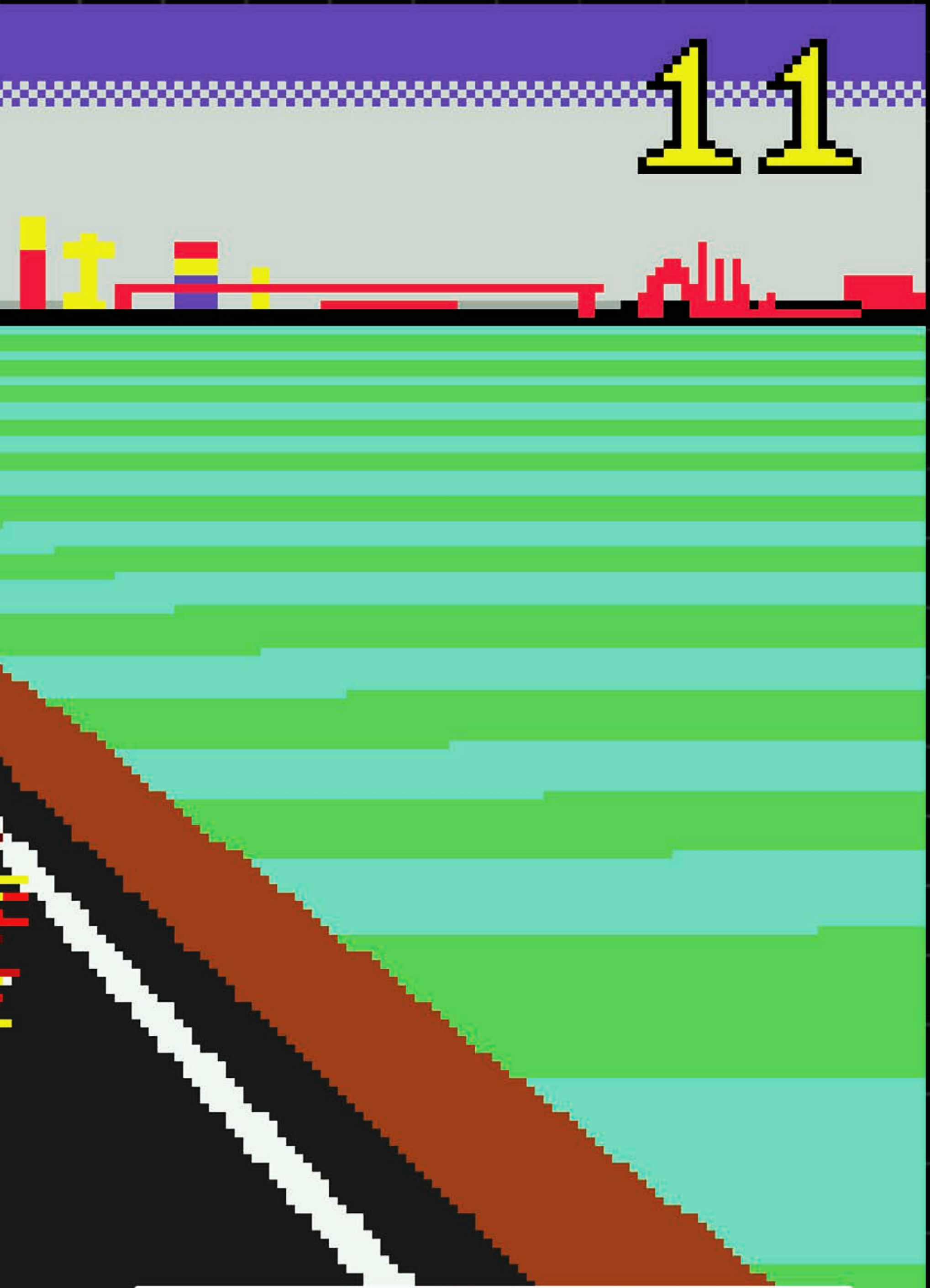
Genre:
Hand-grabbing Action Platform Title

Developer:
Sega Technical Institute

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.

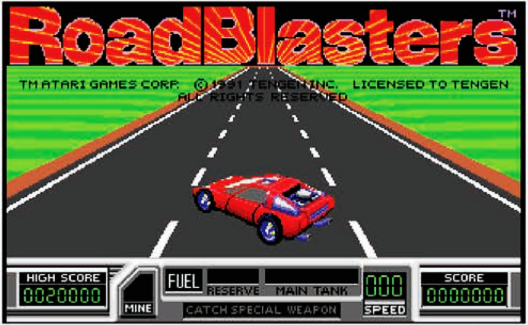
RM
RoadBlasters
SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE
By Sterling Silver Software
RoadBlasters
Manufactured by Sega Enterprises, Ltd. for play on the SEGA GENESIS SYSTEM.
SEGA GENESIS
OFFICIAL SEGA GENESIS SEAL OF QUALITY
TENGEN
TENGEN
301032-0150
KM
HIGH SCORE 0020000
MINE
FUEL
RESERVE
MAIN TANK
CATCH SPECIAL WEAPON
170 SPEED
SCORE 0000000



RoadBlasters -

What makes a driving game fun to play yet includes a great sense of speed and variety creating the perfect elements of arcade game play? This is a question I'm sure many game developers came across, but with RoadBlasters all the perfect ingredients and foundation had already been laid some five years previously. So, factor in the difficulty of supporting your car with enough fuel to make it past both the checkpoint and Rally Point, and you have a game that's extremely easy to get into the moment you switch on your Mega Drive. This is not without caveats: the Mega Drive Version of the game doesn't have the speech found in the Arcade original and nothing new has been added to offer something different (like support for two players). Regardless, RoadBlasters is an excellent conversion that will satisfy anyone's need to travel 200+ m.p.h. on a futuristic highway.

The controls in RoadBlasters are pretty simple, which is part of what makes the game so much fun. You just use the d-pad to move your car, and a face button to shoot at your enemies. You can do a number of things with this limited control scheme: you can shoot your machine gun or use a weapon power-up, and you can also race all around the level at ungodly speeds. The look and feel of this game is straight from the arcades. The first-person graphics do display some rough edges, but the action and play are captured well. You need this in your collection today. ■


RoadBlasters™
TM ATARI GAMES CORP. ©1991 TENGEN INC. LICENSED TO TENGEN
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
HIGH SCORE
0020000
MINE
FUEL
RESERVE
MAIN TANK
CATCH SPECIAL WEAPON
000
SPEED
SCORE
0000000

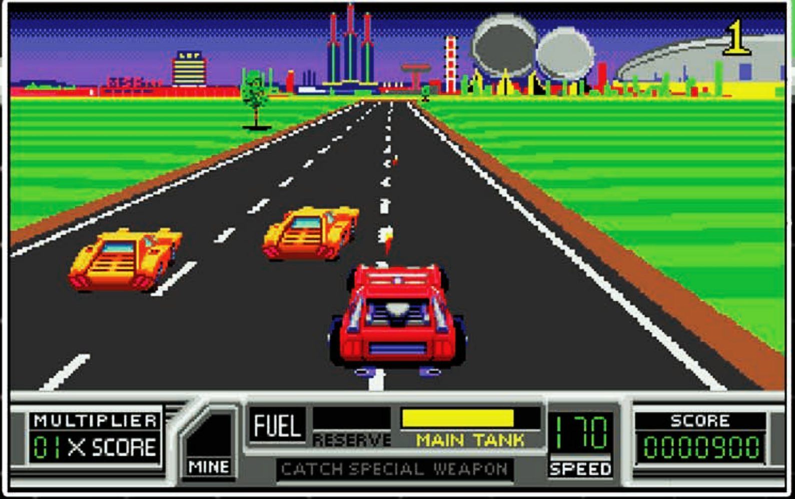
Title:
RoadBlasters

Genre:
Arcade Action Driving Title

Developer:
Tengen

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Tengen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MULTIPLIER
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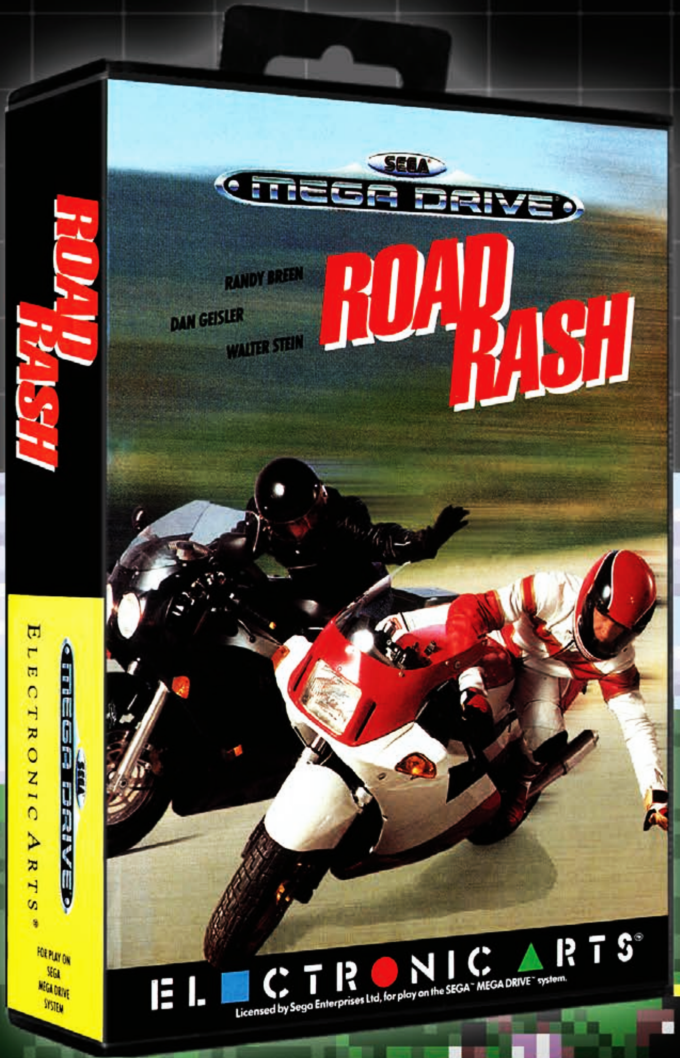
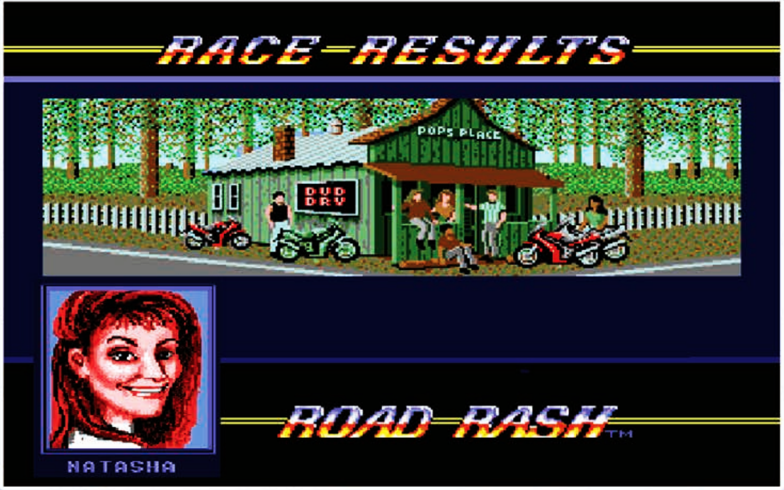
FUEL
RESERVE
MAIN TANK
CATCH SPECIAL WEAPON
170
SPEED
SCORE
0000900


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ROAD RASH
RANDY BREEN
DAN GEISLER
WALTER STEIN
ELECTRONIC ARTS
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA™ MEGA DRIVE™ system.
FOR PLAY ON SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM

14TH PLACE
BIKE
GUNTHER
100
60
140
20
14
01:06



Road Rash -

So I have a confession to make. This was not the first version of the game I played. First came the Game Gear version which was great, then the Game Boy version and the less said about that the better. Then came this version. Wow. The sound and the graphics were one thing, but that speed you felt you were going on those bikes was something else. The Mega Drive version of this game was truly the most superior version out there.

What made this game so appealing was obviously not the racing it was the fighting…whilst racing. We have all played that racing game where no matter what you do the game has that second place racer right up your exhaust. Well in this game you had permission to kick the **** out of them. It was made all the sweeter when you took that club off them that they were trying to wrap around your helmet. Though there was a price to this satisfaction in the shape of your stamina bar, which was an early example of everything in moderation. Lose it and you come off that bike. Then it became a mini-game of dodge-ball with moving traffic. ■

ROAD RASH TM

Title:
Road Rash

Genre:
Bike Action Mayhem Racing Title

Developer:
Electronic Arts

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Electronic Arts

SEGA
RED ZONE
TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE™ SYSTEM

X08404
Rocket
72

Red Zone -

A country called Zyristan has fallen victim to a military takeover lead by former colonel Ivan Retovitz, who as rumor has it, possesses huge nuclear weapons depots. The news agencies catch wind of this, and soon the UN gathers to discuss what should be done. Then, without warning, Zyristan invades a small country nearby, bombing villages without mercy and killing thousands of civilians. And so, the UN's best military commanders decide to send in a single helicopter with one of three skilled pilots on what is called Operation Red Zone . The team behind Red Zone "Zyrinx" were a collective of Commodore Amiga demo scene creators that could really knew how to get incredible and technician feats out of the Sega Mega Drive.

Red Zone boasted rotating textured backgrounds, full motion video, polygons, real-time zooming, and vector graphics. Zyrinx even spent the first screen of the gaming boasting that these impressive visual feats were all running without the use of additional hardware. Zyrinx also found ways to push the Mega Drive's audio capabilities. The music in 'Red Zone' plays at a crystal clear 44khz quality instead of the standard compressed 11khz. It was wonderful way to show off the eerie soulful electronic music composed by Jesper Kyd. Red Zone is great in that it makes you step outside your comfort zone and play games you would normally ignore. 'Red Zone' was to be Zyrinx's final Mega Drive game. Once it was released the team focused their attentions toward Sega's Mega Drive successor; the Saturn. ■

RED ZONE
TM
Start
Password
Music
History
(tM) & (C) 1994 Zyrinx

Title:
Red Zone

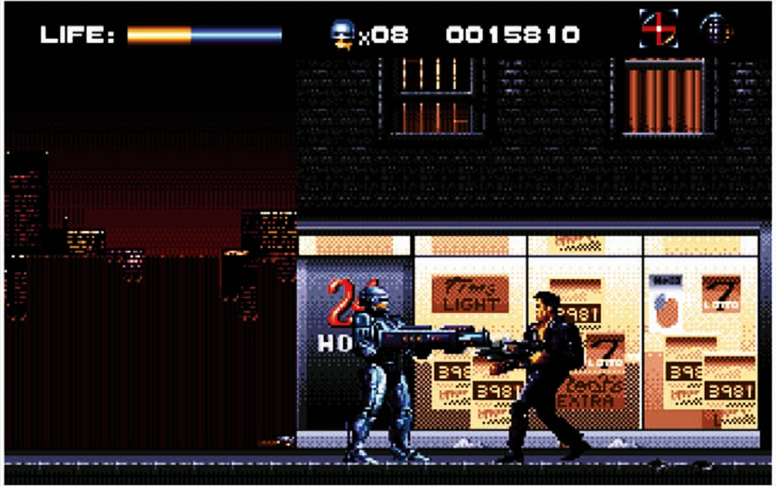
Genre:
Aerial Combat & Pseudo 3D Action Title

Developer:
Zyrinx

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Scavenger, Time Warner Interactive

Virgin
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ROBOCOP™
THE VERSUS
TERMINATOR™
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM
Virgin
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
T-70166-50

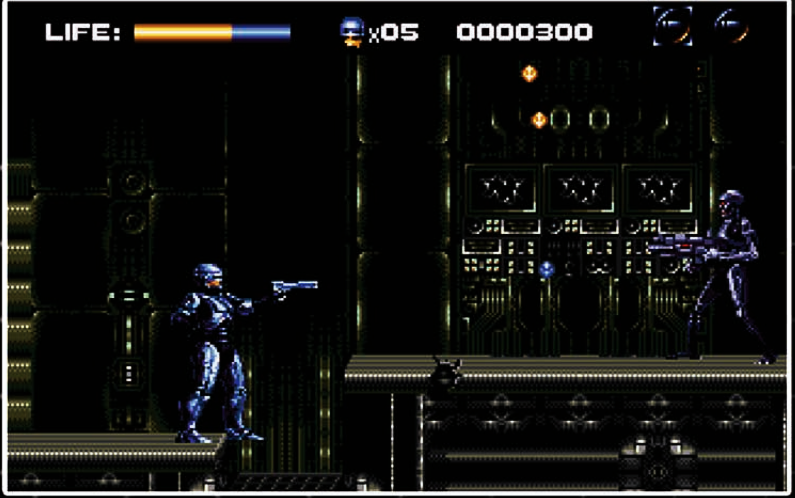

LIFE:
x08
0015810

Robocop Vs. Terminator -

Robocop vs Terminator is quite simply one of the finest games to have ever graced the Mega Drive/Genesis. Back in 1994 I bought a mate's Mega Drive off him and this was one of the titles that was included – Sunset Riders, Ranger X, Sonic 3 being three of the others – and I barely played anything else. The look of the game captures the dystopian feel of the stories of Robocop and The Terminator perfectly. Sure, Murphy isn't the most graceful protagonist you'll ever see in a platformer/run and gun game, but you'll be mowing down bad guys with panache in next to no time. It's one of the goriest 16-bit games you'll ever see but it's all well placed.

Levels ranging from the battlegrounds of the future to the OCP offices will have you gripped. Murphy has several high-powered weapons at his disposal when tackling all manner of Terminator, but make sure not to die when you're holding your favourite – you have been warned! Throw in a pumping soundtrack, some epic boss fights and many, many references to all the good Robocop and Terminator movies and you've got something very special indeed. Less said about the SNES version though, eh. ■

ROBOCOP
VERSUS
THE TERMINATOR
START GAME



Title:
Robocop Vs. Terminator

Genre:
Iconic Movie Tie-in Arcade Action Title

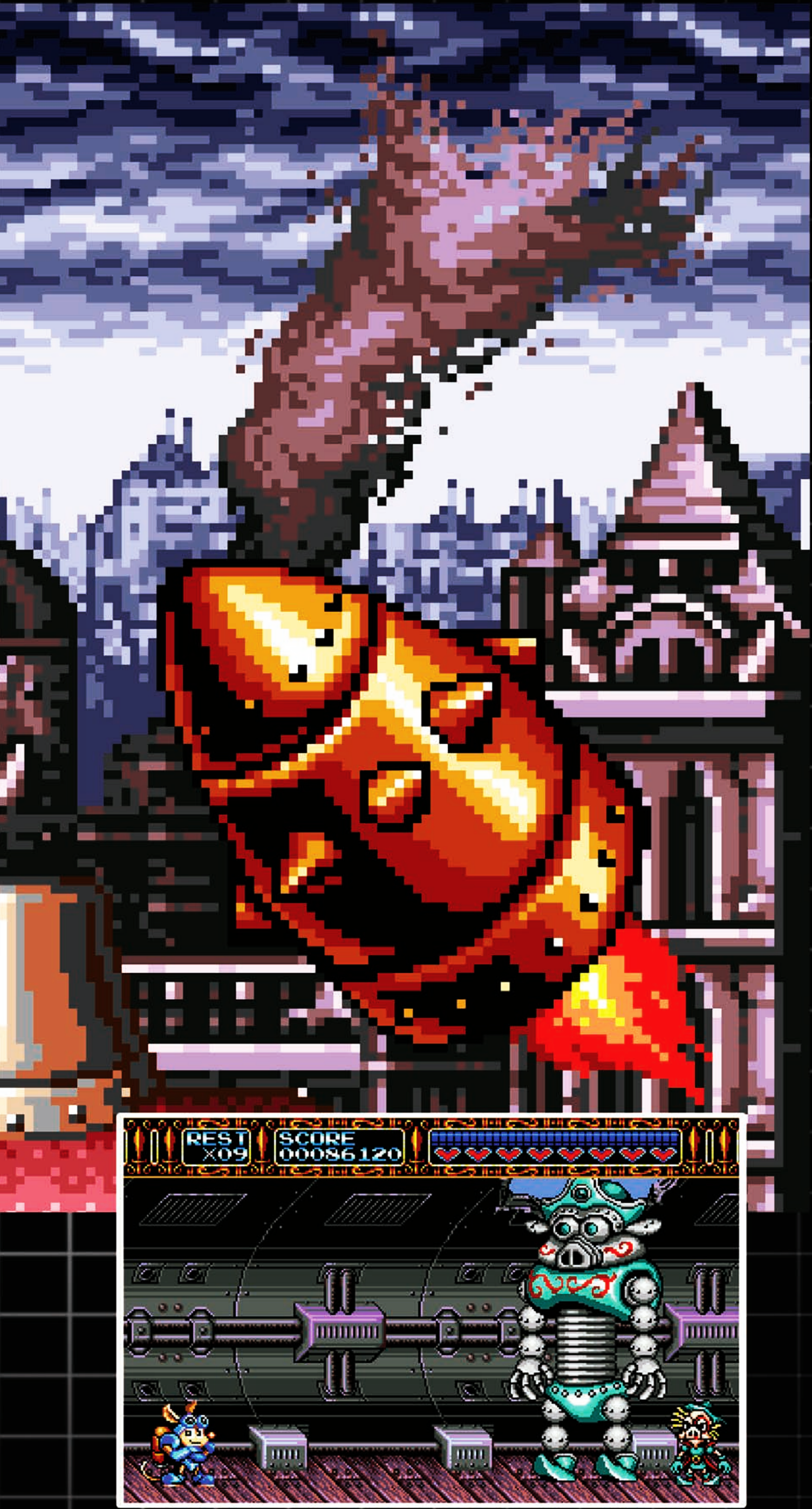
Developer:
Virgin Games, Inc.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Virgin Interactive

KONAMI
KONAMI
FEATURING SPARKSTER™
ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES ™
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD. FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA™ MEGADRIVE™ SYSTEM.
T-95046-50

REST
X02
SCORE
00000020



Rocket Knight Adventures -

Rocket Knight Adventures is a 3-D action platformer released by Konami. The game features Sparkster, the titular Rocket Knight, on his journey to rescue the princess from the evil pigs. The levels are typical for a platformer of the era: start on the left and finish on the right. Along the way, Sparkster can make use of several skills. His main weapon is a sword that throws sparks, as well as his jetpack that can engage a spin attack or dash attack. He can also swim and fly (when necessary) and, thanks to this, levels vary from land, sea, and air, with a lava level tossed in for good measure.

The music takes full advantage of the Mega Drive sound processor producing a very catchy soundtrack with lots of fun sound effects, really leaving the player feeling like they've defeated an enemy. Difficulty can vary greatly, especially later in the game. After you make it to space, Sparkster has to deal with invincible enemies and environmental hazards that deliver one hit kills, really frustrating an unprepared player. The plot is shown in cutscenes between levels. This is an excellent addition to the Mega Drive library and should be included in everyone's collection. ■

ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES™
▶ START
OPTIONS
©1993 KONAMI ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Title:
Rocket Knight Adventures

Genre:
Arcade Action Hero Platform Title

Developer:
Konami Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Konami

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ROLLING THUNDER 2
namco
SEGA
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Rolling Thunder 2 -

Despite its 90's setting, Rolling Thunder 2 nailed the 60's spy aesthetic perfectly. There had been games before it that aimed for something similar, but its stylised art backed by a smooth, jazzy soundtrack combined to create the game's aesthetic and complement the on-screen action so perfectly. In a genre where solo play was often the norm, the inclusion of a 2-Player mode enhanced the experience significantly. When playing alongside a friend (in my case, my brother) you really do feel like one half of a sleek, crime fighting, cop show duo. The game's gorgeous cut scenes, delivered with a captivating anime visual style, helped to create an atmosphere where you find yourself taking cover from enemy fire, entering rooms not only to evade foes, but to stock up on weaponry and ammunition.

Rolling Thunder 2's narrative-led presentation was something particularly unique for the time and for the genre. Not many arcade games featured the level of detail seen here, interspersed between all of the action. Thankfully, these scenes were included in the Mega Drive port, with some extra segments added before each stage that weren't even present in the Arcade original. Quite the achievement, Rolling Thunder 2 was a striking example of how to deliver a home port without having to sacrifice the core elements of the original. ■

ROLLING THUNDER 2
TM
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1990 1991 NAMCO LTD.
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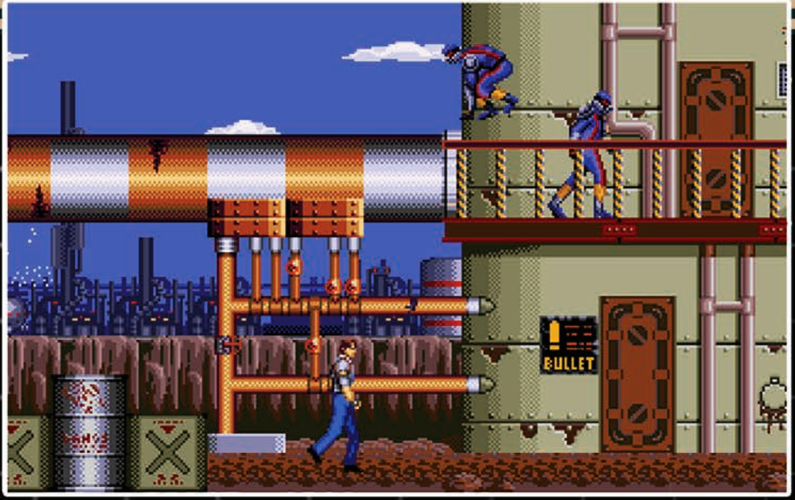
namco



Title:
Rolling Thunder 2

Genre:
Classic Arcade Spy Agent Sequel

Developer:
Namco

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
Sega

CORE
DESIGN LIMITED
Unveiled

From humble beginning of former Gremlin Graphics employees brought forth a power house developer to arrive within the 16-bit home computer and console market place, Core Design was born and would go on to create a selection of memorable titles for the Sega Megadrive and Mega CD machines.

Back in the first half 1988, a brand-new software house was founded under the fascinating name of "Megabrite", but before the year was out had reinvented and renamed itself to "Core Design", the name by which we all remember it today. This wonderful new enterprise was formed from the ashes of Gremlin Graphics. Chris Shrigley, Andy Green, Rob Toone, Terry Lloyd, Simon Phipps, Dave Pridmore, Jeremy Heath-Smith, Kevin Norburn and Greg Holmes were the driving force behind Core Design, who went on to create some of the best titles to appear on the home computer market. The likes of the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga were early beneficiaries of Core Design titles before they moved on to creating titles for the Sega Mega Drive and Mega-CD. They would eventually go on to create a very famous female video game action-adventure protagonist: Lara Croft.

As a newly formed software developer they would oversee two Sega arcade home computer conversions for popular computers at the time. Their first was Sega's 1986 Spy Hunter style title "Action Fighter" and was met with a moderate audience and was enough to prove that Core Design had the talent and skill to produce decent arcade conversions. Their second release would be the cute arcade scrolling beat'em up "Dynamite Düx" in 1989 and found itself doing better in the magazine reviews at the time. The Commodore Amiga and Atari ST versions of the game include an alternate, intentionally offensive version of the opening cutscene and officially isn't playable out of the box but can be found and accessed by editing game data with a hex editor.

Core Design would break the mould with the introduction of a new video game character: a mini pixelated cross between "Indiana Jones" and "*Allan Quatermain*" going by the awesome name of "*Rick Dangerous*". This was the creation of Simon Phipps and was a lightning caught in a bottle moment for video games at the time. This game combined 16-bit tomb raiding action platforming brilliance and devilish pit-traps and marked Core Design as a newcomer to watch. Rick Dangerous was converted to many platforms and spurred a sequel in 1990 under the title of "Rick Dangerous 2", continuing on the action from the first title. The Sega Mega Drive never saw an official release of any of the Rick Dangerous titles until 2018 when homebrew coder "Alekmaul" took the task of porting the excellence "Rick Dangerous 2" to the Sega Mega Drive and is great fun and an amazing conversion of this classic title.

From 1988 to 1990, Core Design would continue to support all the major home computer formats with their own original IPs as well as other commissioned works for other software distributors. And what better way to bring one of their popular 16-bit IPs to the Sega machine (in 1991 for the Mega Drive* and 1993 for the Mega-CD*) than with their witty stone age platform title "Chuck Rock". This performed fairly well as their first release on the Mega Drive and although many in the know normally compare Chuck Rock as a generic cash-in platform title, I think the game's themes is enough to set it apart based on other games of its type. It performed even better on its 1993 debut on the Mega-CD with a humorous full cartoon style opening introduction setting the premise for the game paired with CD audio quality music and sounds enhancing the overall experience.

Core Design would find themselves venturing into other circles with commissioned works for various clients and one such was with the "Sony Image Works" gaming brand. They took the opportunity and were tasked with producing the Mega Drive and the Mega-CD versions of 1993's "Hook" featuring 11 levels on the cartridge version and 12 levels on the Mega-CD version. The film's musical score was

55
Ashbourne Road, Derby

Home of Core Design, Derby

adapted for use in the Mega-CD version, and also includes digitized graphical sequences from the film along with voice acting. The Mega-CD version includes a computer-generated scan of Captain Hook's ship which is featured during the game's introduction.

1992 would see Core Design be at its busiest time, with many Sega releases of popular home computer ports making their way across to the Mega Drive and Mega-CD platforms. There were a varied number of releases, covering lots of different genre: the sequel to Chuck Rock, "Son of Chuck"; 3D helicopter combat simulator "ThunderHawk"; wolf-transforming action-adventure title, "WolfChild"; Amiga original licensed driving title, "Jaguar XJ220"; and fast-paced cute puppy title, "Wonder Dog", a title mainly made for, and taking full advantage of, the Sega Mega-CD, in particular the audio and storage capabilities afforded by the CD format. The original Mega Drive platform also received a number of releases, prominent among these being Chuck Rock 2, Hook, Wolfchlid, and Asterix and the Great Rescue. The future looked bright for Core Design, despite time moving on and development and production costs increasing. Core Design were tasked with bringing more of its own unique style and spin to their new games and began considering which direction to take, whether to support the Mega Drive or push more towards the Mega-CD platform.

1993 through 1994 Core would go on to produce three exclusive Sega console titles, of which one would appear on the Sega's semi-successful add-on the "32X". That title was "B.C. Racers", a Mario Kart clone set in the Chuck Rock universe and featuring that character and his son alongside a whole new cast of characters created exclusively for the game. It was released in 1994 for the Sega CD and 1995 for the 32X. The game was one of few to utilize the Mega-CD's onboard 3D scaling routines to generate that perspective scrolling. This was rarely implemented, and the title was one of the few appearances of the technique on the Mega-CD. This was a huge shame as this had the potential to truly change the dynamic of what the Mega-CD could achieve. Core Design were one of very few software developers that tapped into this hardware technique. Rounded off with a fully animated opening sequence, this delivered a truly professional Sega title.

Soulstar and Battlecorps were two highly prolific titles to emerge from the Core Design stable and were exclusively released on the Sega CD/Mega-CD. They both delivered a fantastic gaming experience, and one was only available on a Sega console. They are one of the main reasons why I felt I had to write this Core design feature. Soulstar received very high praise for its technical achievement on the hardware, it's great soundtrack and multiple play styles. Although this was essentially a rail-shooter, it gave Sega players a fun space shooter with some fantastic scaling scenes and sprites and has some great "Space Harrier" influenced moments I personally loved. It really is very much worth its weight in gold as a title to own for the Sega CD/Mega-CD.

Battlecorps was a first-person shooter played over 13 relatively short levels. The aim of the game is to navigate each of the levels, completing objectives along the way, until you reach the final encounter with MOSES. But with Core Design adding a challenging experience for gamers, don't expect this to be a walk in the park. Again, they brought their scaling routines to this game, and it was done with great effect: Battlecorps was a polished and nuanced game. Near the end of 1994, we would see only two titles appear on a 16-bit Sega console: "Bubba 'n' Stix" and "Skeleton Krew". These were ported from the Commodore Amiga and featured only minor enhancements. These titles signified the end of Core's contribution to the 16-bit era.

Core Design witnessed the beginning of the Sony Playstation and Sega Saturn era, and they would play a significant and successful role during this period. However, 1996 would see Core Design go through a transitional phase, with a change of company ownership. The studio was part of distribution company "CentreGold" when it was acquired by Eidos Interactive in 1996. Eidos subsequently sold most of CentreGold, but retained U.S. Gold, the owners of Core Design at the time. This acquisition was regarded as a relief by Jeremy Heath-Smith, who commented, "The funding of development is so expensive that I doubt we could have continued to fund ourselves as an independent company."

With Eidos Interactive now the bosses of Core Design, they wanted the company to move into the direction of 32-bit gaming via Sony's and Sega's new machines. They would find two very talented designers and creators amongst the Core Design staff: Toby Gard, who worked as lead artist and creator of Lara Croft, and Paul Douglas. These were the talents behind the very first Tomb Raider titles. This franchise which would find itself in ruins within a few short years of its first outing, but that's another story. The success of the first Tomb Raider has been credited with making Eidos Interactive a major force in the industry. The game was initially released on the Sega Saturn before being ported to the Sony Playstation and MS-DOS. In 1997, Sony signed a lucrative deal with Eidos Interactive which would keep any future Lara Croft outings exclusively on their platform. This removed any competition which might have been offered by the Sega Saturn and gave the Playstation a keen edge over its rival. I believe this was a big mistake by Eidos Interactive as the Sega Saturn was more than capable of handling the Tomb Raider engine, but as they say: "Money talks and bulls**t walks".

As Core Design continued to work on this series, it appeared from the next iterations of Tomb Raider games that the series was starting to lose its lustre. After the critical failure of Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness in 2003, parent company Eidos charged Crystal Dynamics, another Eidos-owned studio, with the development of the Tomb Raider franchise. This led to key members of the Core Design management team and development staff to leave the company and establish a new one called Circle Studio. This company was formed and staffed in October 2003, only a short time after the future of Lara Croft had been taken away from Core Design.

In 2005, Circle Studio finished working on a title called "Without Warning", a third-person shooter for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox published by Capcom. Circle Studio transitioned to developing and publishing licensed DVD games with distribution handled by Pinnacle Vision. But things did not fair well for Circle Studio despite having secured a seven-figure investment from the Royal Bank of Scotland in May 2006. In the February of the following year, the company was liquidated.

But for those of you that remember Core Design and their games, there is no denying that they created some great game. Some of you reading this may not agree, but Core Design have a special place in video gaming history and went on to create excellent games for the Sega Mega Drive and the Sega Mega-CD. Their clever innovation of style and graphics made their games unique, especially if you remember their days on the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST. They had some great ideas and concepts and deserve to be covered in this feature. It is not often you hear of an English game developer expanding and releasing their games both in Europe and internationally.

Core Design where a great bunch of talented artists, coders and musicians and with excellent management made them a great part of the Sega Mega Drive universe. ■

INTERVIEW

WITH FOUNDING MEMBER OF CORE DESIGN

CHRIS SHRIGLEY

A founding member of Core Design, co-founder of Eurocomm. Chris worked at Gremlin Graphics in the early years where he programmed lots of games on the Commodore 64, Sinclair Spectrum and the MSX. Chris was also apart of the development of titles for the Megadrive - Genesis and MegadCD - SegaCD released by Core Design

Can you talk us through your career, where you started right up till now and what games you worked on?
Phew! A big, open question to start. Well, let me see. My actual career started when I joined Gremlin Graphics in 1986. I never really considered it a career until much later though. Before that, I was just some kid, playing coin-op games and messing around on my Commodore 64 in my bedroom. The first game I programmed and got published was a text adventure game called Pub Quest, programmed in BASIC. I was 16. It taught me a lot about game logic, structure, and programming in general. I naturally progressed to assembly language, and collaborated with some friends (Rob Toone and Andy Green), to make something more ambitious and closer to what we were playing in the arcades. We made Bounder over the summer of 1985, and sent it off to Gremlin towards Christmas. They liked it, and offered us all jobs, working full time up in Sheffield. We started in early 1986 and started work on our second game Future Knight.

The industry went through a bad patch, and around 1988, Gremlin decided to close the Derby office and make us all redundant. Jeremy Smith and Kevin Norburn took the office over and relaunched the team as Core Design. I worked at Core for just over a year, and programmed a couple of games, including Action Fighter, and Saint and Greavsie. I left Core to set up another company called Eurocom, with my friend Mat Sneap, focused on NES console development.

Was working in the gaming scene back then as rock n roll as we all imagined it to be?
Oh yes, it was very rock and roll. Apart from the fame and the fortune part. Still, plenty of drinking was done and it was basically just a bunch of lads having a laugh and making cool toys for people to play with at the end of the day. There was a lot going on back then; new ideas, independence, money, hubris.. A potent mix when you add youth and boundless energy. I was very naïve though, and in retrospect got taken advantage of a fair bit. There were a lot of young, energetic people doing massive amounts of work for peanuts (at least at the start), and our energy and enthusiasm was exploited to a certain degree. Exploitation is something that only got worse as the money got more serious and the businessmen realized the real potency of games. But that's a whole other discussion.

Do you have any anecdotes you can share from those days?
I've shared most of the interesting ones over the years. Here's a random one.. There was a time, back at Core Design, when we dismantled the manager's office chair to its individual, constituent parts, and hid them all over the office. We taped pieces to the ceiling and under his desk, and even placed a critical bolt in the company post box, which he didn't find for about a week. He was really pissed with us and walked out after our little prank, and didn't come back for a couple of days. There was a lot of those sort of shenanigans, for sure.

Looking back, which one of the software companies you worked for did you enjoy the most and why?
They've all had their high spots, but my favorite was Gremlin Derby / Core Design because we were all mates before we even worked there, and we got on like a house on fire. There were so many shenanigans it wasn't even funny. We would make so much racket that the adjoining and surrounding businesses would literally shout at us and complain to the building management. It got so bad we were given an official notice by the landlords to shut

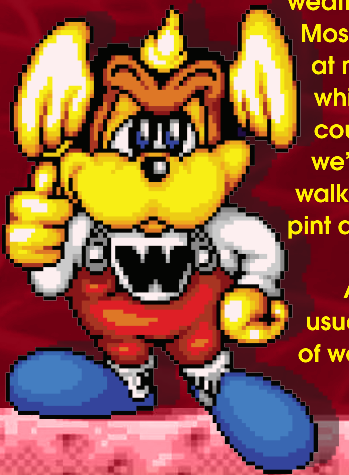
INTERVIEW
WITH FOUNDING MEMBER OF CORE DESIGN
CHRIS SHRIGLEY

up or get out. We shut up, mostly. We had a particularly dangerous game we would play based around rounders (or baseball), where the batter would use a length of hoover piping for a bat, and various, random office items were thrown at them. A few times things would end up embedded in the walls. Rob, Andy, Terry, Dave, Simes, Stu, all of them were such a great bunch.

How many of you was there at the beginning of Core Design, and how did the company get started?
Core was born out of the death of Gremlin Derby. The industry was in dire straights, and Gremlin couldn't afford to keep the Derby office going or pay our wages. We heard rumbling from Sheffield that something bad was going down, and we were inevitably summoned up to Sheffield to face the music. I can remember sitting in Ian Stewart's office being told we were being made redundant. We were pretty shocked. Kev Norburn was there, and in the next breath, he turned round and said he and Jeremy were starting a new company, and offered us all jobs. A few weeks later, Jeremy Smith, Kevin Norburn, Greg Holmes, Rob Toone, Andy Green, Terry Lloyd, Simon Phipps, Dave Pridmore and Myself, were in business as Core Design.

What was your day to day like at Core Design like?
Core was pretty relaxed. I'd usually roll into the office around 10 in the morning. My commute was a 40 minute walk, populated with a couple of stops to buy snacks and pop to sustain me through the workday. The office was a long box with windows down one entire wall and a small, doored-off office at one end where Jez and Kev would hide. I sat at the far end from the office, like the naughty kid at school sitting at the back. I had a corner to myself and my desk looked out the window onto a carpark.

I had a PC and a C64 set up with joysticks and floppy drives and lots of paper and books strewn around. A typical day would go something like this; Sit down and chat with Terry and Rob for half an hour, work for an hour or so, have a break and mess around and have a laugh for half an hour, do a bit more work, go for a wander and a wee, eat a snack and drink some pop, mess around while waiting for the sandwich man to come– The sandwich man was named "Normal Norman", which wasn't his real name, obviously, but he was a very strange chap and he'd hang around talking about games, giving us the willies, so we called him "Normal Norman", as you do. After procuring lunch, which was usually a tuna salad cob and a bag of Seabrooks crisps, I'd settle into a bit more work. Lunch varied and depended on how bored or how nice the weather was outside. Most of the time I'd eat at my desk and chat while I worked, but a couple time a week we'd usually end up walking into town for a pint and a chip butty.



After lunch I'd usually get quite a lot of work done, happy to sit quietly with headphones on while my body extracted energy and nutrients from my meal. After a couple hours, someone would usually wander over and sit down for a chat, or I'd go and bug Rob or Andy about a bug I couldn't figure out. We'd often talk each other through our bugs and have those aha! Moments of enlightenment when we realize what plonkers we were being. The afternoon, although quite productive, would be heavily punctuated with snacks and pop and the occasional shop run to buy more. People would start packing up and leaving around 6 in the evening, but often there would be people hanging out in the office working or playing until late into the evening.

Quite a few times, I'd go to the office late at night, 10pm or later, either on the way back from the pub or sometimes just to have some peace and quiet, or fix something I'd randomly figured out how to fix, and there would be other people there, hanging out. At the end of projects, I'd essentially live at the office and people would drop in at all hours to give me gifts of food.

How long did you stay with Core Design
I was there for about a year. Why did I leave? The short answer is, that I left to start Eurocom with my friend Mat Sneap, making games for NES. The long answer is a bit more complicated and involves secret meetings and angry, shouty people. I've said this before in another interview, but I'll reiterate it here. When Core was started, we were all promised a share of the company. It was apparent, very quickly that this was not going to happen. I was, and still am, a bit of a rabble rouser, especially

in the face of injustice, so I called a secret meeting at my house with the others to discuss things. There was a lot of fist shaking and angry muttering, along with lots of pizza eating, but not much else. Someone told Jeremy about the meeting, and I was summoned to his office for a bollocking (and probably worse). I sat down and Jeremy was very pissed with me. I spoke my mind and we shouted at each other a bit, and he fired me. I told him he couldn't fire me because I already quit, so it's a coin toss over whether I was fired or I quit. I'd been working with Mat for a couple of months, getting ready to set Eurocom up, so I was ready to bail anyway. I moved on.

Gargoyles is a great game on the Genesis, How much assistance did you get from Disney as far as the license goes and were you allowed to make the game your way or did they specify what kind of a game it had to be?
That game was really hard, so I'm impressed you finished it. We got a lot of assistance making the game. We had access to everything from the cartoon series, and access to all history and backstory to the characters. The animation for Goliath was done by the same people who animated the cartoon, and we had writers and concept artists from the TV show involved too. Even the music was written by Michael Giaccino, who went on to score games like Call of Duty, and TV shows and movies like Lost, Alias, The Incredibles, UP, Star Trek, and Mission Impossible. It was a great project to work on, and had a number of really cool firsts for me, working for a big company like Disney, with all their resources and money. Actually working for Disney was a real thrill too. Growing up in England, I never dreamed I'd end up working for The Mouse.

Are you still in contact with anyone from those days? (to Sega CD era)
I am with quite a few of them. Rob Toone lives about a mile away from me, and Andy Green lives in Illinois. Terry Lloyd and Simon Phipps are back in England doing their own thing and kicking butt. I keep in touch with a bunch of old timers through Facebook or The Chaos Engine. Only a few of them have dropped out of the games business, which is quite surprising.

Have you ever gone through you old files and found incomplete games that you may release to the retro scene?
I'm a source code hoarder, and have managed to save some source code over the years. I lost a few of my older archives unfortunately, but I did release a game called Hero Quest I made for NES, just before I came out to the States, on Lost Levels a few years back. I have an old source code archive on my website (shrigley.com), with a few complete games for NES and Sega Genesis for educational purposes. I don't have any C64 stuff though, at least not here in the USA. I still have some boxes stored at my Mums house which may have some treasure in.

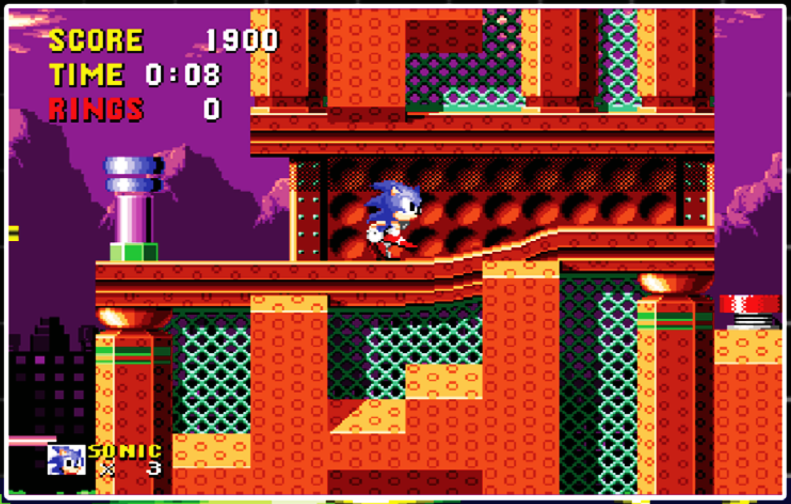
You've worked on games from various entertainment franchises (Batman, Masters of the Universe, Star Trek, James Bond, Gargoyles). Were you a fan of any of these when working on the games?
Yes, absolutely. I'm a card carrying nerd, I'm afraid. Particularly love Star Trek (although Deep Space 9 was never my cup of tea). I used to own a comic shop when I lived in England, many years ago (around the time I was working for Gremlin / Core), so I was also a bit of a comic nut, and collector.

When I made Masters of The Universe, I got to go down to London to watch a private screening of the movie before it was released. That was a great experience.

Do you have a favourite console you prefer to work on? Which did you find more challenging to develop for?
My favourite console was the Sega Genesis, mainly because it was the last piece of hardware I was able to spend any length of time getting intimate with. By the time I finished Gargoyles, I knew the hardware like the back of my hand, and felt very comfortable with it. After the Genesis, it got harder to become an expert, as hardware lifecycles got shorter, and teams got bigger, and you were mostly responsible for a part of a game, rather than the whole thing. Getting down and dirty with the hardware, and poking at the metal got harder, as it was abstracted away from the programmer. Unless you were an engine guy, you never really dealt with the hardware directly. It was always through a library or and SDK.

You coded both Batman Returns and Cliffhanger on the Sega CD/Mega CD why do you feel this add-on ultimately failed?
Lack of developer support eventually. Game systems are only as good as the games on them and they need a steady supply of tasty new games to keep the punters happy. It's a bit of a chicken and egg thing I suppose. Consumers were wary and maybe a little confused about what it was and why it was better than a Genesis, and so sales were sluggish and didn't really motivate studios to make games for it. Vicious cycle ensues and the platform dies. Ultimately the failure lies at Sega's feet because it's their job to make everyone happy, consumers and developers, which they didn't do.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA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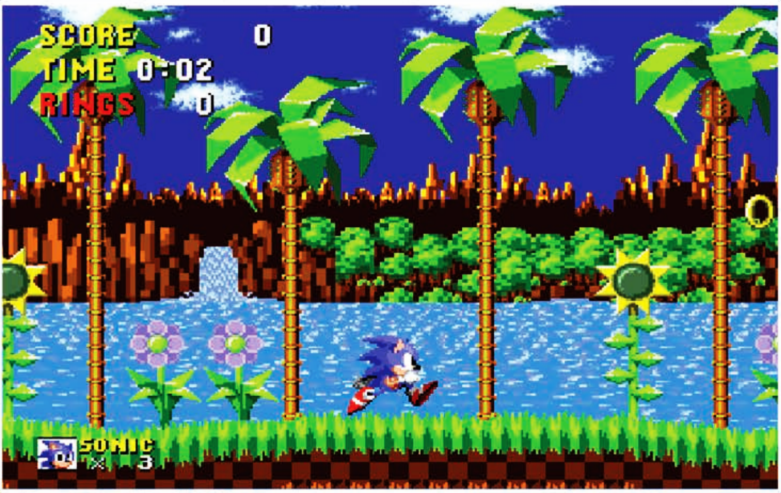


SEGA MEGA DRIVE

Sonic the Hedgehog -

SEGA of the 90s hit a homerun with this one. This was a platformer with gorgeous visuals and gameplay so fast it felt like greased lightning. Sonic was the poster child for the Megadrive's 'Blast Processing', and it proved to be a wildly successful start to one of SEGA's most cherished franchises.

Unlike most platformers that had come before, this one had gamers utilizing their momentum to reach blinding speeds and make huge jumps. After playing through the game a few times, it rewarded those who memorized the layout of the levels, allowing for some incredibly fast action. Players take the role of Sonic, a blue hedgehog with fast moves and an attitude, as they play through a variety of levels to save animals who have been turned into robots.

This game became the pack-in title for the Megadrive, so this was many peoples' first impression if they bought a console after 1991. Sonic is one of those special games that leave a lasting impression, and its bouncy soundtrack, vibrant sprite work and fluid gameplay have really stood the test of time. If ever you needed a reason to own a Megadrive in the 90s, Sonic was persuasion at its strongest.

SONIC
TM
THE HEDGEHOG
SEGA
©SEGA 1991

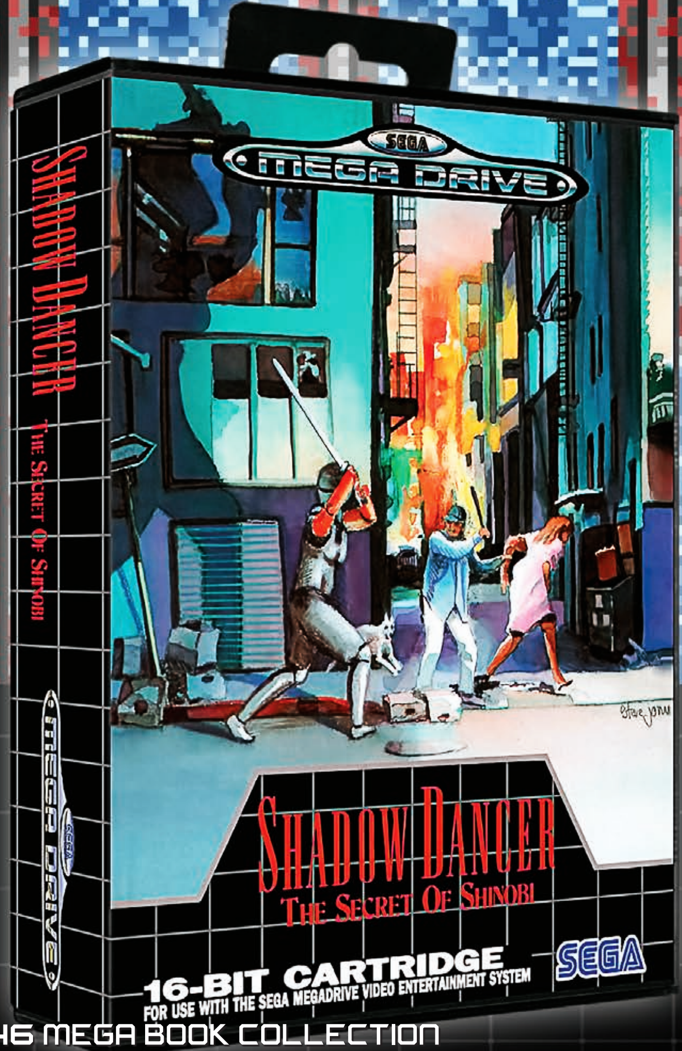
Title:
Sonic The Hedgehog

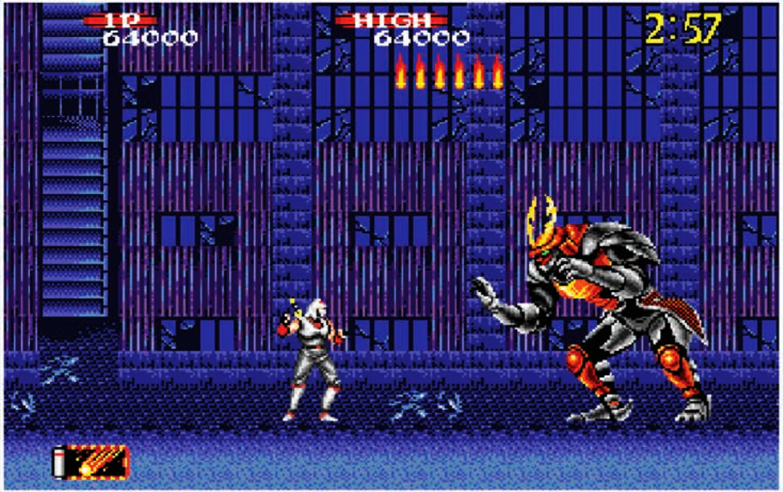
Genre:
Sonic Action Platform Title

Developer:
Sonic Team

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SHADOW DANCER
THE SECRET OF SHINOBI
SHADOW DANCER
THE SECRET OF SHINOBI
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
SEGA MEGA DRIVE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64000
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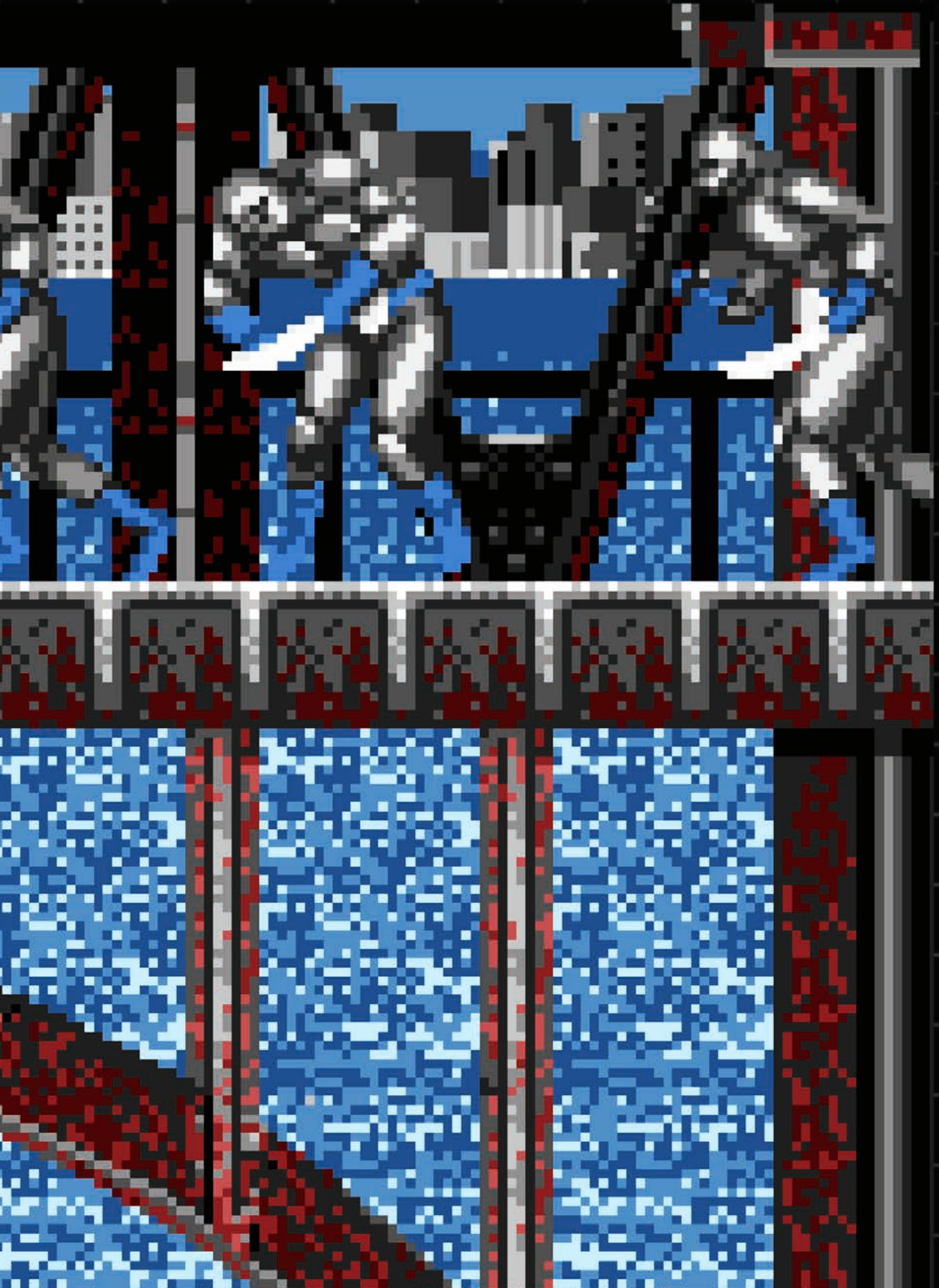
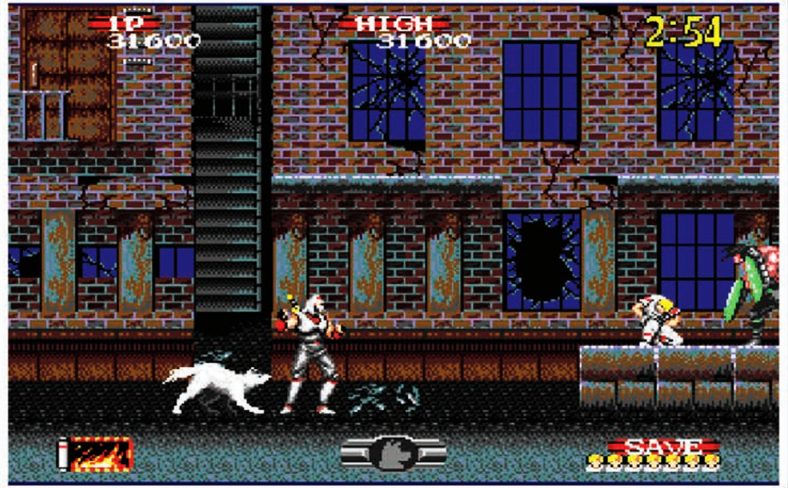


Shadow Dancer -

The second Shinobi game on the Mega Drive/Genesis is by far my favourite. Not a port of the arcade game like the Amiga or Master System versions, this is a highly playable console game in its own right. Joe Musashi and his faithful dog companion Yamato are here to save New York City from Union Lizard, a bunch of nasty ninjas who will try and slash you, shoot you, and even throw their oversized shields at you!. One thing I love about most ninja games is the traditional Japanese setting, but taking the action to the West gives Shadow Dancer an eerie feeling.

You'll be putting Union Lizard (and some pretty hefty bosses) to the sword on New York's burning streets, bridges, warehouses and ascending the Statue of Liberty is about as epic as 16-bit action gets. The game benefits from immense playability, varied attacks (magic, melee combat and who can forget Yamato's bite) and a superb soundtrack. Is the game too short? Possibly. But crank it up to max difficulty and you won't be saying that. It may not be as technically advanced as Shinobi 3 but it's a lot more fun in my eyes, and definitely worthy of being in your collection.

SHADOW
DANCER



Title:
Shadow Dancer

Genre:
Ninja Action Scrolling Platform Title

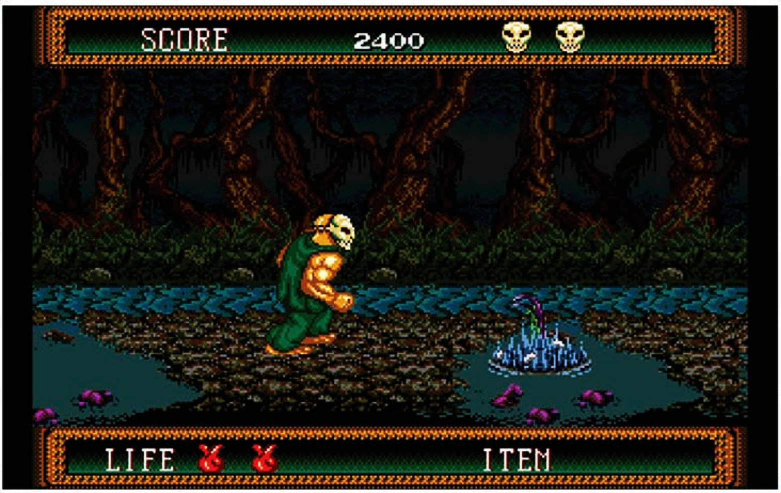
Developer:
Sega R&D 2

Year Released:
1990

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SPLATTERHOUSE 2™
namco™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

SCORE
3800
ITEM
LIFE
ITEM



Splatter House 2 -

Splatterhouse was originally released on the Turbografx-16/PC Engine but it saw its sequel released exclusively to the Genesis/Mega Drive in 1992 in all its colourful gore. It is clear that this game series was inspired by the many horror movies of its time (like Friday the 13th and Halloween) when you look at the characters, visuals, and setup for the game's story. Splatterhouse 2 is set three months after the events of the original game. The Terror Mask reappears to tempt Rick, the main character in the game, to go back to the house where it all started to rescue Jennifer.

The player controls Rick, the mask wearing hero, through eight different stages as he faces monsters of all colours and shapes. Rick can punch, kick, jump kick, and slide kick all the enemies but he is also able to use various weapons that he finds as he advances through the game. Things start outside the mansion and move inside as the stages advance. Each stage has a boss at the end, each boss looking like a very grotesque figure, each with different types of attack. You can enjoy killing monsters of all kinds and see the great animation as you split them in half with your fists, clobber them with dinosaur bones, or cut them with a chainsaw. One cool feature is that monsters show damage as you hit them until they finally explode in a mess of green goo. The game music and sounds do the job just fine but they are not spectacular. Overall a great game for Halloween! ■

SPLATTERHOUSE 2
TM

PRESS START BUTTON

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namco

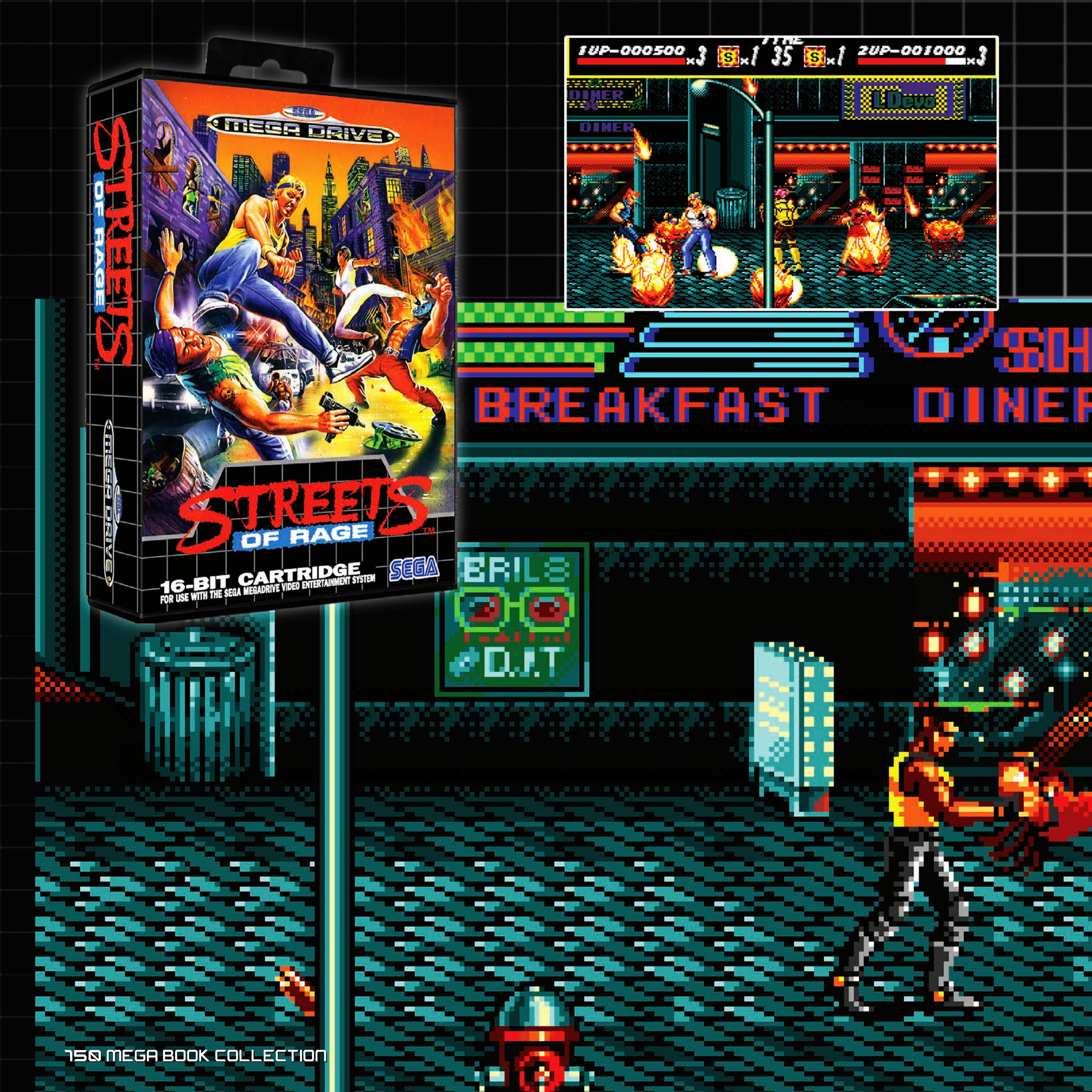
Title:
Splatter House 2

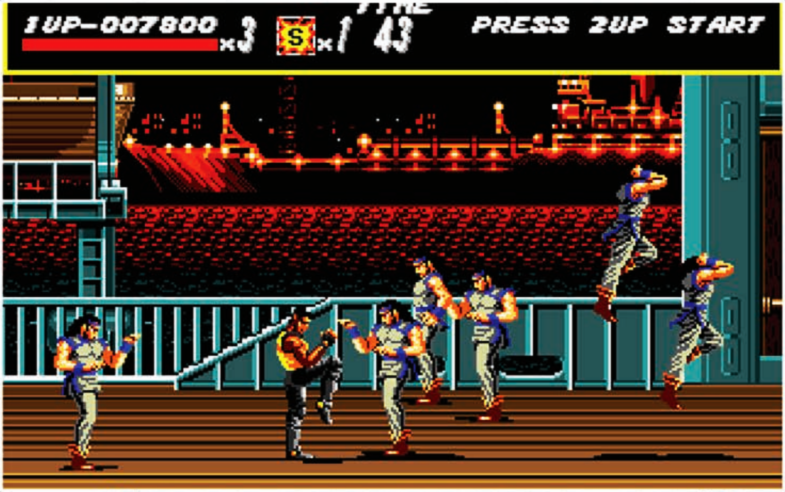
Genre:
Side Scrolling Gorefest Beat'em Up

Developer:
Namco

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
SEGA


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
STREETS OF RAGE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
1UP-000500 ×3
TIME
35
2UP-001000 ×3
DINER
BREAKFAST
DINER



SEGA MEGA DRIVE

Street of Rage -

Streets of Rage wasn't the first beat 'em up on the market but it was by far one of the most polished when it was released. While other games like Final Fight and Double Dragon were birthed in the arcade, Streets of Rage was a Megadrive exclusive. Sega was really firing on all cylinders with this one. Again, this was a game designed by Yu Suzuki and his small team at SEGA. The 90s were full of buddy cop movies and arcades were bustling with fighting games, so Streets of Rage is the perfect blend of these two elements.

Streets of Rage had players delivering street justice as undercover cops, laying down the law with punches, kicks and lead pipes. This was a brilliant game, and it had co-op mode, so players could team up with a friend or sibling. The soundtrack was phenomenal with thumping bass-lines inspired by popular club music at the time. Punching outlandish goons was a blast here, and if things ever got a little overwhelming, the player is armed with a powerful screen clearing attack. You know that these police officers weren't messing around when their back up were armed with rocket launchers. ■

STREETS OF RAGE TM
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1991 SEGA
MUSIC © 1991 YUZO KOSHIRO

Title:
Streets of Rage

Genre:
Side Scrolling Beat'em Up

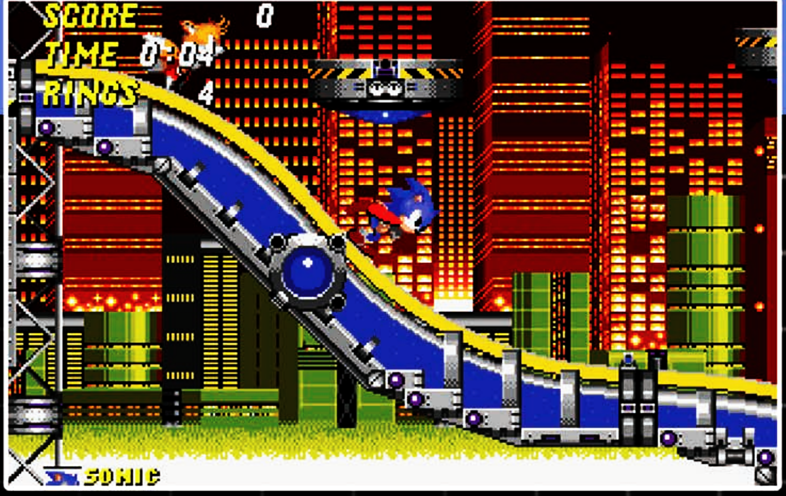
Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1991

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SONIC

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE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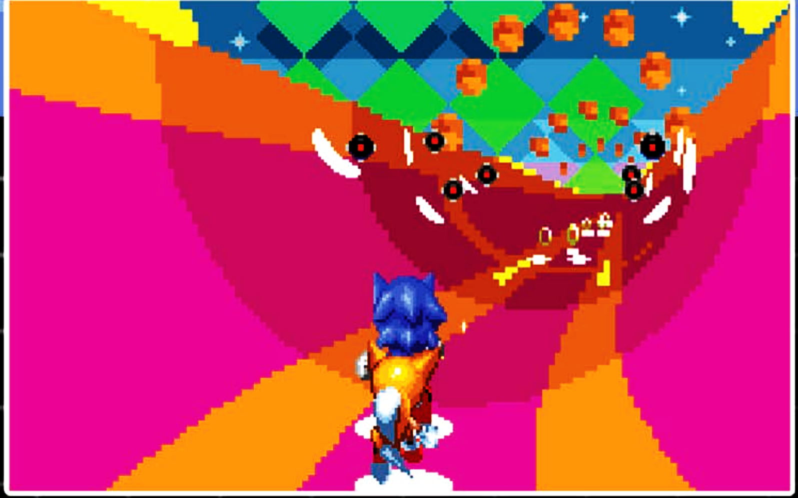
TIME 0:04
RINGS 4
SONIC



SEGA MEGA DRIVE

Sonic The Hedgehog 2 -

The blue blur is back! Teaming up with new sidekick Miles “Tails” Prower, Sonic the Hedgehog is once again out to stop the evil Dr. Robotnik, this time trying to steal Chaos Emeralds to power his space station, the Death Egg. Widely regarded as one of the greatest games of all time, this is an adrenaline-fuelled adventure not to be missed! Players can choose to play as Sonic, Tails or both with Tails running alongside Sonic and the option for 2 player co-op play. Lots of new, vibrant levels await the twosome, each with their own unique quirks like Emerald Hill’s corkscrew loops and Chemical Plant’s boost pads.

Composer Masato Nakamura returns with a bold and catchy soundtrack, complimenting each stage’s look and atmosphere. And upon collecting 50 or more rings, a special stage dips its toes into the world of 3D in a psychedelic half-pipe course with the possibility of winning a Chaos Emerald. Collect them all and Sonic can become ‘Super Sonic’ with greater attack and jumping abilities and invincible to attacks at the cost of depleting rings. A fast-paced thrill ride for original fans and series newbies alike, this is the Sonic title that will sweep you off your feet! ■

SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG
TM
2
1 PLAYER
2 PLAYER VS
© 1992 SEGA

Title:
Sonic The Hedgehog 2

Genre:
Sonic Arcade Action Platform Title

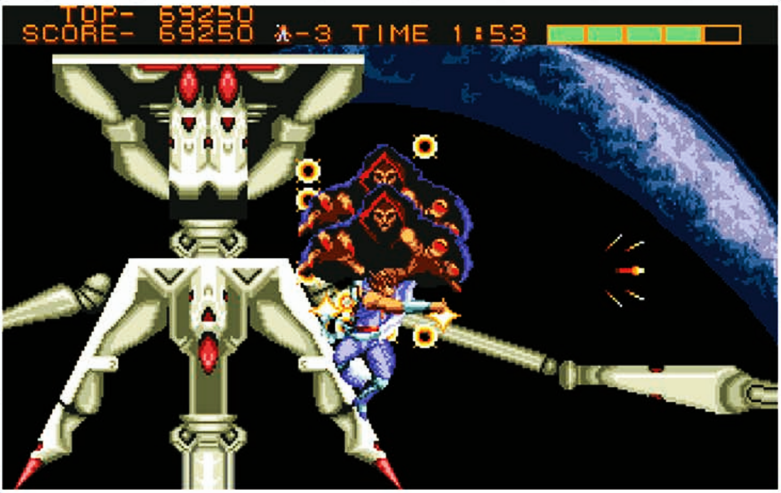
Developer:
Sega Technical Institute, Sonic Team

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
STRIDER
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

TOP- 20000
-2
TIME 1:07



Strider -

In the distant future, Earth is overrun by an ever growing and powerful horde of creatures and robots. It soon transpires that the mastermind behind the devastating attacks is Meio, a Grand Master who has been planning to rule over Earth from his space station in orbit. The secret Strider training facility assign their last hope, Hiryu, to defeat Grand Master Meio and restore peace on Earth. A conversion of Capcom's original 1989 hack and slash arcade hit, the game tasks the player with travelling across the five varied levels, taking out all enemies and boss guardians on the way to face the Grand Master himself.

As a trained Strider, Hiryu has many moves available as he takes on the enemy, including a cartwheel jump, sliding attack, and the powerful plasma sword slash, as well as the use of his Sickle to help climb walls or hang from pipes. Item containers such as sword power-ups, extra life, invincibility and health restores appear to help Hiryu in his mission. Strider was an early release for the Mega Drive and showcased what the 16-bit was capable of with an almost perfect arcade conversion. While the gameplay is spot on, it's the visuals and audio that are particularly impressive with stunning level design, unique graphics, and an atmospheric soundtrack. ■

Strider TM
PRESS START BUTTON
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REPROGRAMMED GAME © SEGA 1990

Title:
Strider

Genre:
Arcade Slash'n'Dice Action Title

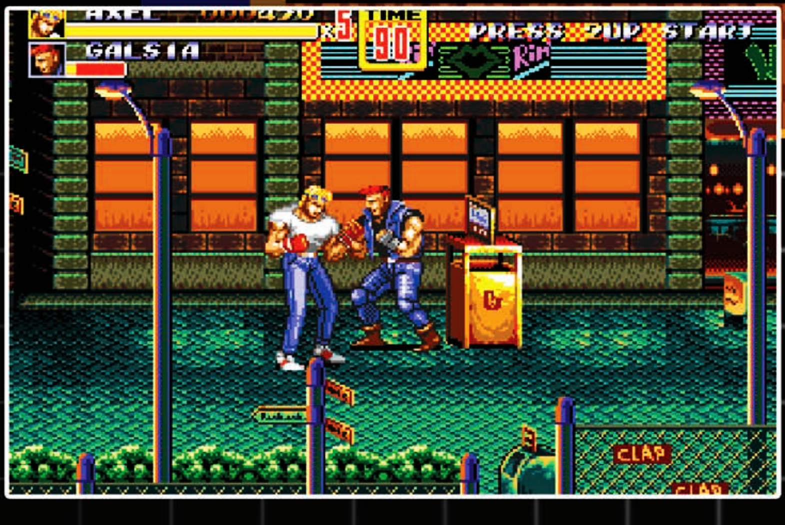
Developer:
Capcom

Year Released:
1990

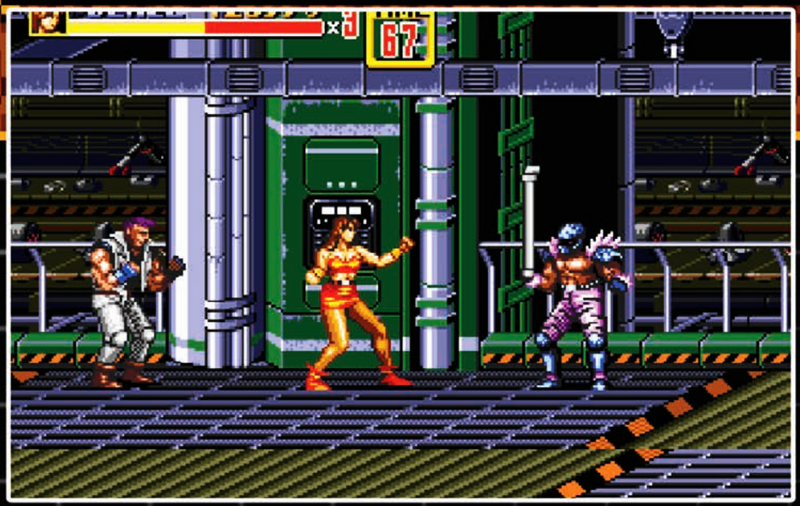
Publisher:
Sega

BARE KNUCKLE

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
STREETS OF RAGE II
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA


AXEL
GALSIA
TIME
90
PRESS 2UP START
CLAP

BARE KNUCKLE



Street of Rage 2 -

Streets of Rage 2 is everything a sequel should be: recognisable as being related to its predecessor, but also more refined, taking what was good and improving upon it while removing any deficiencies. Set a year after the events of the first game, Mr. X and The Syndicate have returned, kidnapping Adam and once again threatening the city. Axel and Blaze are determined to restore order and rescue their friend, assisted by Adam's brother, Skate, and Max.

With this sequel, Sega created a fantastic side-scrolling beat-em-up, amongst the best ever made. The two new characters offered a much greater depth to the game, being significantly different to play compared to the two returning characters, and offered a much different dynamic when playing with a second player. The graphics are bigger and brighter, while Yuzo Koshiro crafted a masterpiece of a soundtrack perfectly complementing the on-screen action. Perhaps the biggest change was to the special button. Rather than calling in a support strike from fellow officers, each character now executed a variety of special moves at the cost of a small amount of health, giving a great risk/reward dynamic to their use. Overall, one of the greatest Mega Drive games ever made.

STREETS OF RAGE 2 ™
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1992 SEGA
MUSIC © YUZO KOSHIRO

Title:
Streets of Rage 2

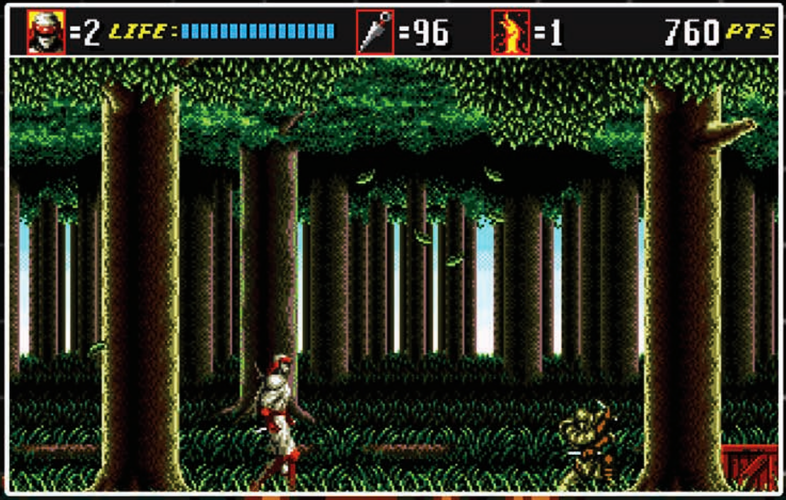
Genre:
Side Scrolling Beat'em Up

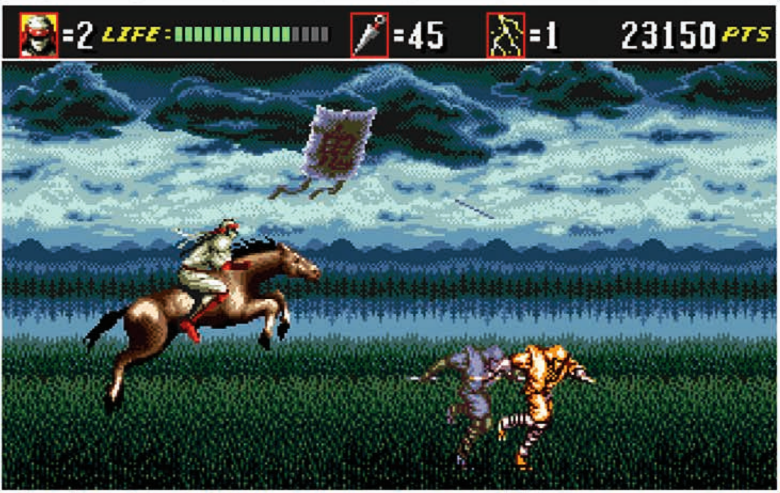
Developer:
Sega (AM7)

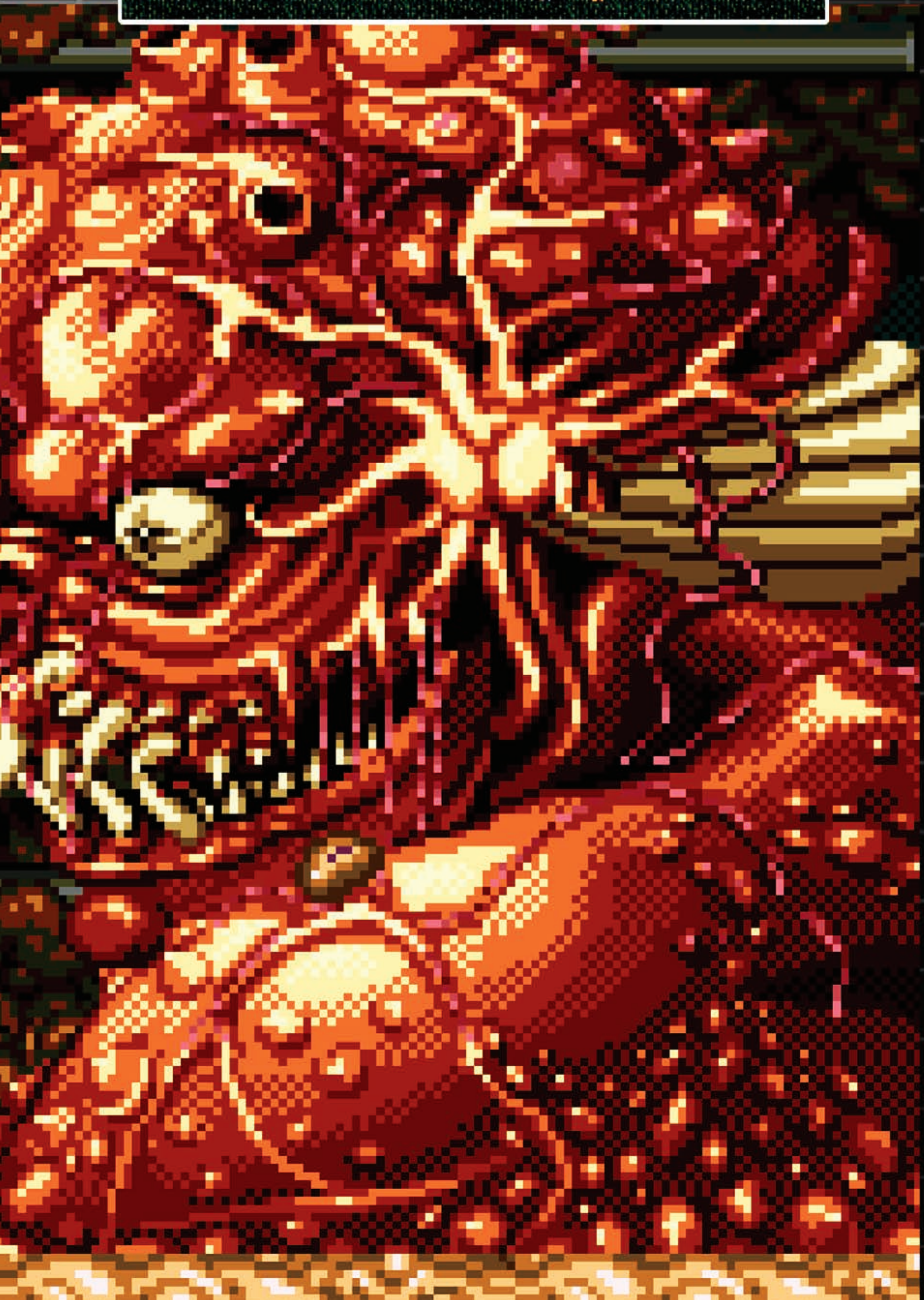
Year Released:
1992 - 1993

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SHINOBI III
Return of the Ninja Master
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA


=2 LIFE:
=96
=1
760 PTS





Shinobi III - Return of the Ninja Master

The Shadow Dancer is back! During his third Mega Drive entry, Joe Musashi is once again slashing and tossing shuriken through Zeed's forces, thought defeated forever in Revenge of Shinobi. This entry continues the steep difficulty trend noted in previous entries, with some parts of the game being almost unfair, but it is still a fun experience. Although Joe has a few more abilities to help him with as he can run and wall kick his way to a speedy victory. Most abilities from the previous games return as we can still double jump, multi-shuriken and sword slice our way to victory.

Ninjutsu is the same as the last entry, giving an extra edge for difficult moments in the game and if you're lucky, you can find an additional spell in a box. Levels vary wildly from forests to machine factories with a large variety of enemy to slay, from ninja to soldiers. And while there are not too many levels they are broken into sections that offer a lot of variety. Bosses are fun and challenging, and even feature Mecha-Godzilla! All in all this is a good addition to the library and an excellent sequel to an already classic series. ■

SHINOBI™
Return of the Ninja Master
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1993 SEGA

Title:
Shinobi III

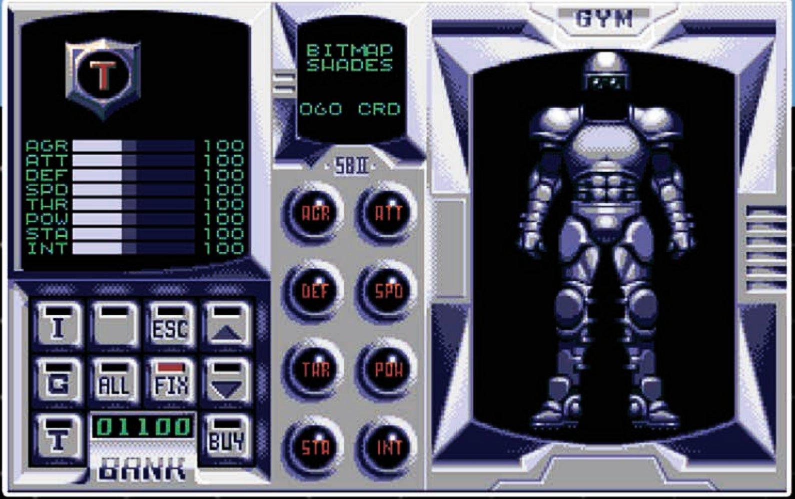
Genre:
Side Scrolling Arcade Action Ninja Sequal

Developer:
Megasoft

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
SPEEDBALL™ 2
Virgin GAMES
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
The BITMAP BROTHERS
T-70086-50
012 1 46 2 032


GYM
BITMAP SHADES
060 CRD
SBII
AGR 100
ATT 100
DEF 100
SPD 100
THR 100
POW 100
STA 100
INT 100
AGR
ATT
DEF
SPD
THR
POW
STA
INT
ESC
ALL
FIX
01100
BUY
BANK

Speedball 2 -

Who can forget that title music? Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe hits hard from the minute you plug in the cart. The original Speedball failed to inspire the masses. Its take on the 1975 sci-fi film Rollerball (about a violent sport played on a roller rink with a metal ball) was well-received on the Amiga, Master System and C64 by critics but sales were few. Speedball 2 took everything that was good about its predecessor and added recognizable teams (including, of course, Brutal Deluxe), varied modes, upgradeable players and a strategy element courtesy of power-ups and means of charging the ball. Score a "goal" with a charged ball and you'll get more points.

The Mega Drive/Genesis version is almost a direct port of the Amiga version. The only thing that suffers is the music, which is still great. Progress through the tournaments and you'll need to upgrade your team. A quick fix is to upgrade your whole team but you'll soon run out of credit. Beef up your defence or inject some speed into the attack, the choice is yours. Speedball 2 is a whole lot of fun. Grab a mate, throw the ball at his goalie, then take out said goalie and ball altogether for a glorious goal. Fun. ■

SPEEDBALL
2
BRUTAL DELUXE

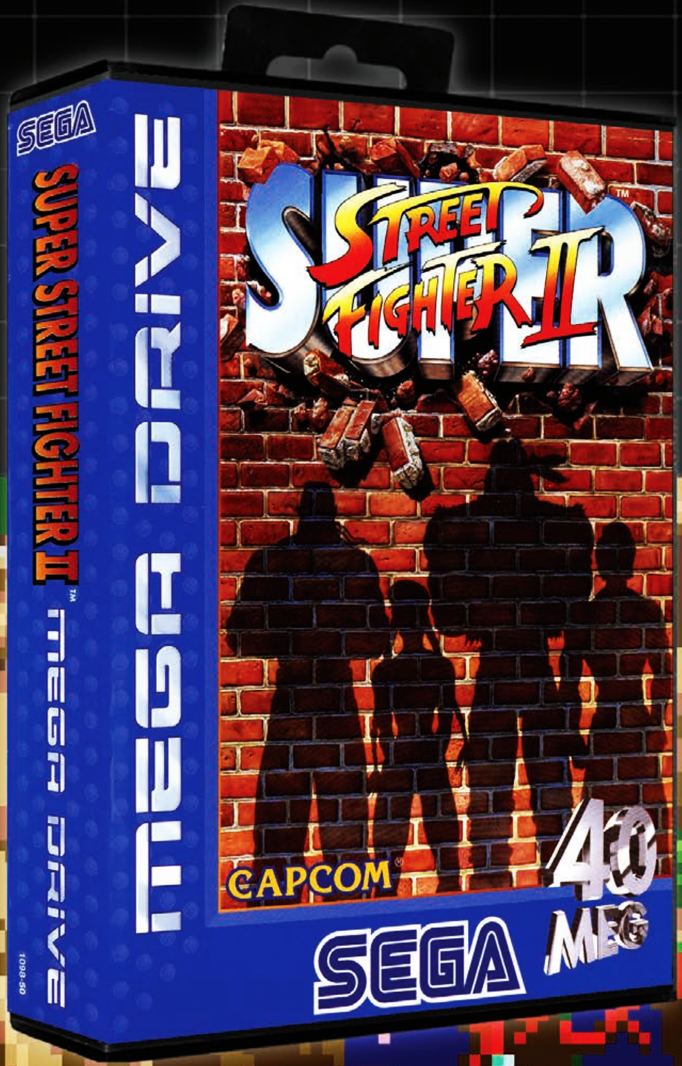
Title:
SpeedBall 2 - Brutal Deluxe

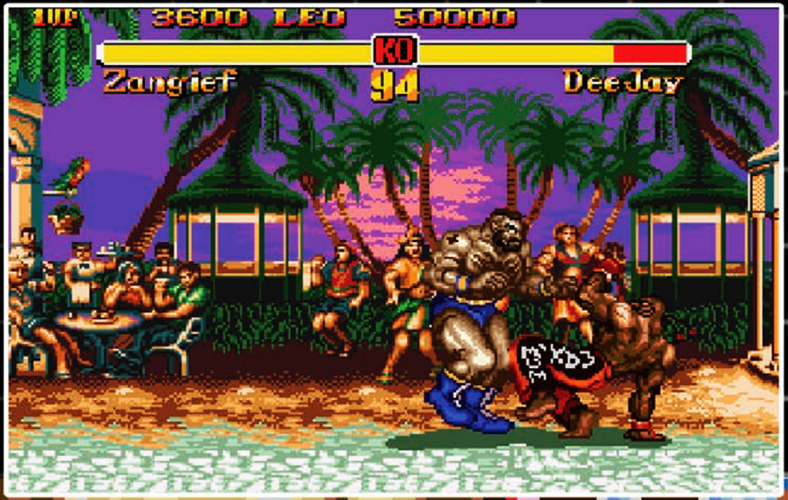
Genre:
Futuristic Combat Sports Title

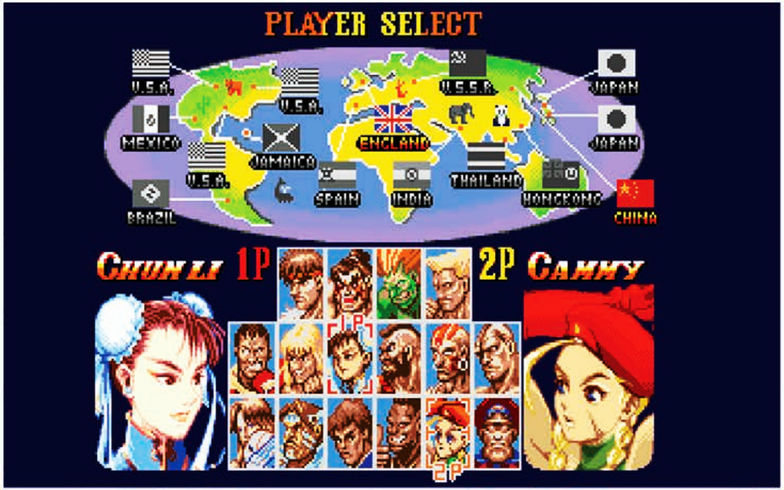
Developer:
The Bitmap Brothers

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Virgin Interactive


SEGA
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II
MEGA DRIVE
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II
CAPCOM
40 MEG
SEGA
1098-50


1UP 3600 LEO 50000
KO
Zangief
94
DeeJay


PLAYER SELECT
U.S.A.
U.S.A.
U.S.S.R.
JAPAN
MEXICO
ENGLAND
JAPAN
JAMAICA
U.S.A.
THAILAND
BRAZIL
SPAIN
INDIA
HONGKONG
CHINA
CHUN LI 1P
2P CAMMY

Super Street Fighter 2:

The New Challengers -

The significance of this version of the game is given away in the title. Of the original twelve fighters, everyone already had a favourite, but then T.Hawk, Dee Jay, Cammy and Fei-Long were added to the mix. What made them immensely cool was that they were not new skins to sprites based on existing characters but were developed and handled in their own way. Oh, and Cammy came from our boring grey shores which was an instant plus.

New characters also brought with them their own stages matching national stereotypes. However, Cammy's English manor looked more like the set of Outlander along with the northern lights. Existing characters got new pallets to their costumes and the tournament was upped to sixteen characters on the Mega Drive, unlike its Arcade counterpart that remained at twelve. The Mega Drive cartridge also boosted the system to 40-bit capacity to allow for more of the iconic catchphrases and an amazing soundtrack to match the arcade version. Outside the game experience, the new character content was incorporated into Street Fighter II: the animated movie (and that other movie) providing the stepping stones to begin the momentum of an amazing franchise beyond the game experience. ■

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II
TM
The New Challengers
© CAPCOM 1991,93,94
© CAPCOM U.S.A. INC. 1991,93,94
LICENSED BY
SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD.

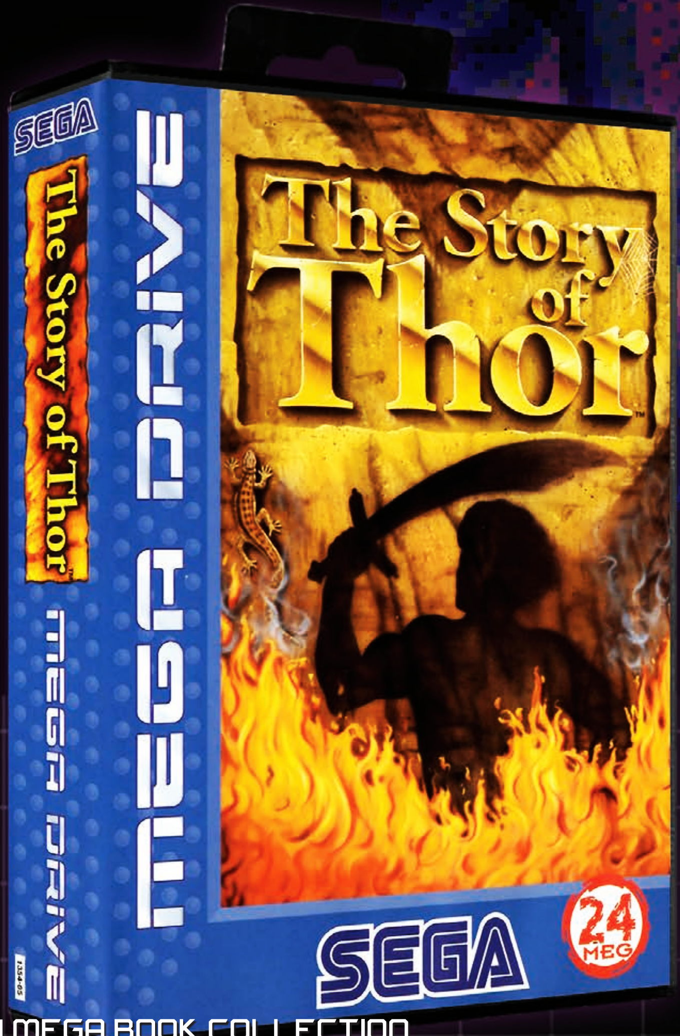
Title:
Super Street Fighter 2

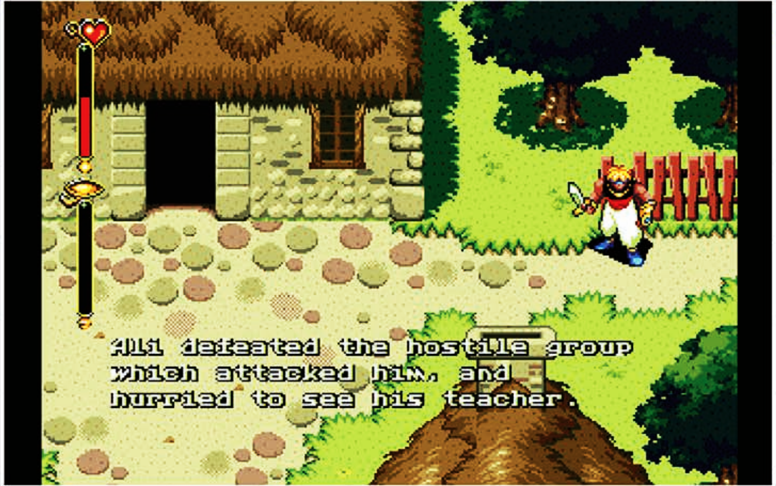
Genre:
Arcade 1 Vs 1 Fighting Title

Developer:
Capcom Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Capcom U.S.A., Inc.


SEGA
The Story of Thor
MEGA DRIVE
The Story of Thor
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA
24 MEG

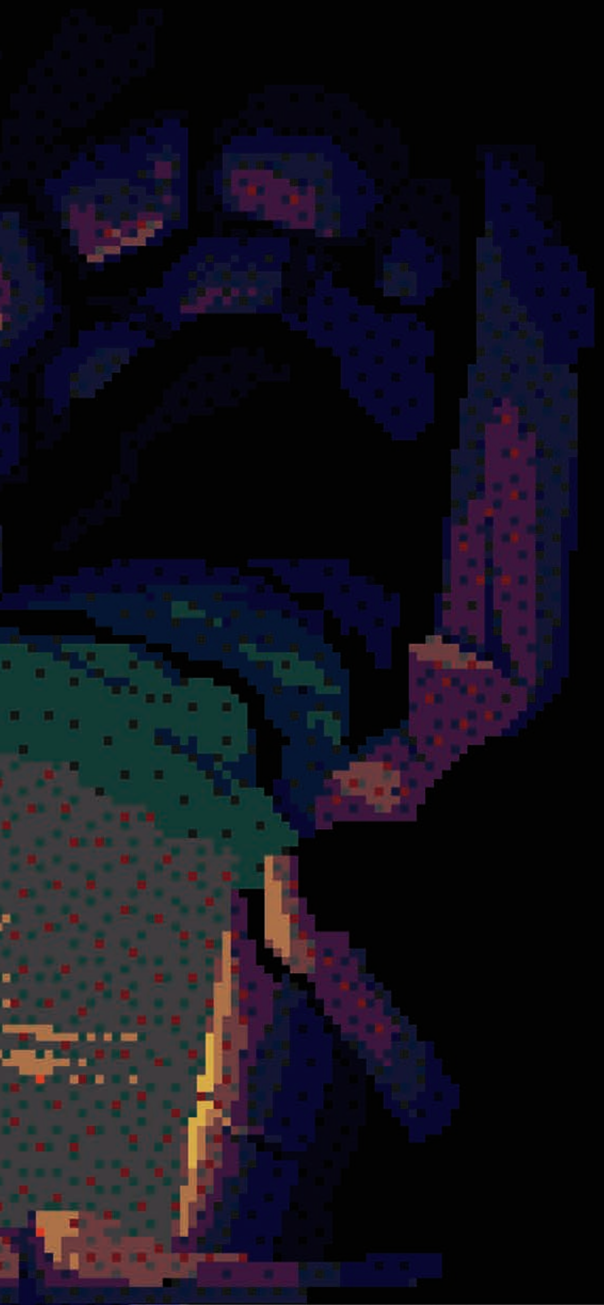


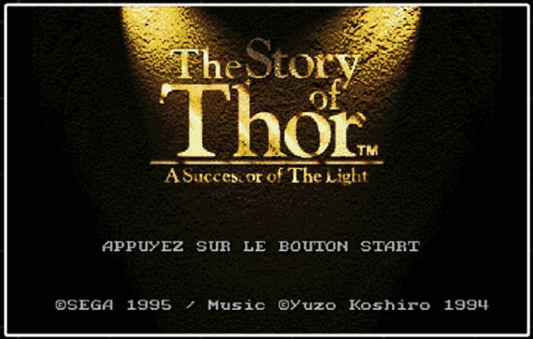
Ali defeated the hostile group which attacked him, and hurried to see his teacher.

Story of Thor, The -

Although the Mega Drive lagged it had its fair share of awesome RPGs. Sadly, many of these titles went unnoticed, not that Sega didn't have a hand in that. One such title was The Story of Thor (Beyond Oasis in the United States) from legendary composer Yuzo Koshiro and Streets of Rage developer Ancient and was a first attempt at an action RPG. Story of Thor is surprisingly good: it does have some flaws but remains well worth seeking out. Prince Ali of the Oasis Kingdom spends his days treasure hunting. On one such hunt he finds a mysterious golden armlet. This artefact once belonged to an ancient wizard who used it to protect the world from the owner of the silver armlet and with both armlets reawakened it and is only a matter of time before the two will engage in conflict once again.

The only real flaw if you can call it that is the game's length. The Story of Thor is extremely short in comparison with others of its genre, but with its satisfying combat and very high production values, The Story of Thor is a fantastic game. Action RPGs weren't exactly plentiful on the Mega Drive at the time, so any game of this calibre was a cause for celebration. Final thought on this would be, with a little more content and a little more longevity it could have been an even bigger classic than it is. ■




The Story of Thor™
A Successor of The Light
APPUYEZ SUR LE BOUTON START
©SEGA 1995 / Music ©Yuzo Koshiro 1994

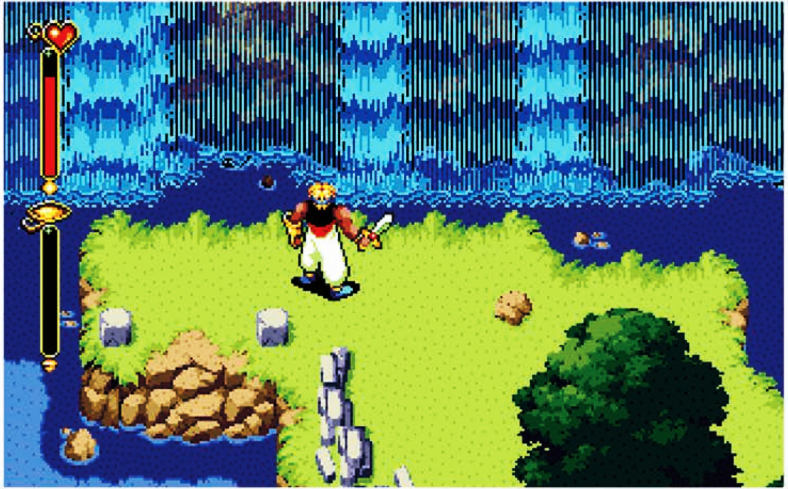
Title:
Story of Thor, The a.k.a Beyond Oasis

Genre:
Action Adventure RPG Title

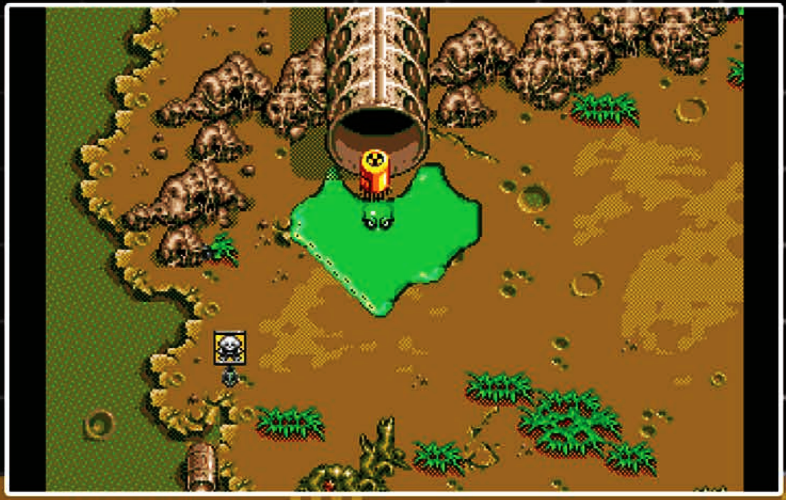
Developer:
Ancient

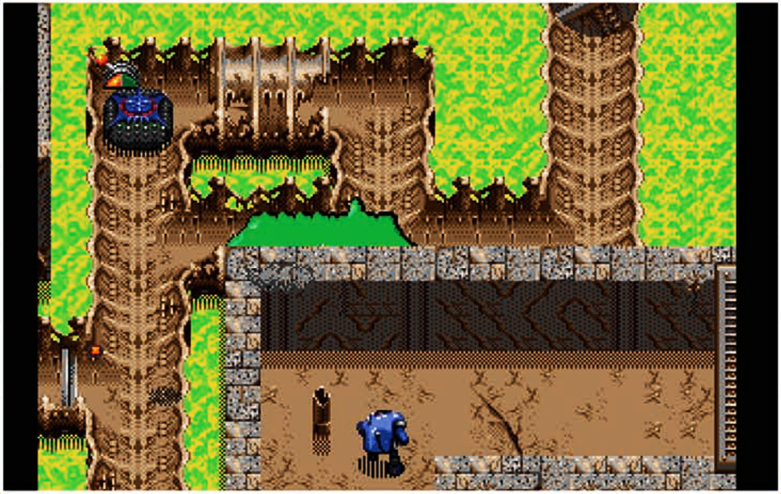
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega



SEGA
THE OOZE
MEGA DRIVE
MEGA DRIVE
1572-50
SEGA





The Ooze -

The Ooze is certainly an interesting game, at least on a conceptual level. The story of the game is that you play as a scientist who is turned into ooze by the evil corporation he works for, and he is on a mission of revenge to take down their toxic organization and regain his humanity. The interesting concept comes from HOW you play as this ooze, as you take the form of essentially a giant moving puddle with a skull at the centre. As The Ooze, you move through various grimy and toxic locales on your trip to take down your boss, only able to attack by way of extending your form in a sort of punch or spitting a glob of goo at an enemy from afar. You can pick up ooze to grow bigger as you play, but you can lose it to various hazards and enemy attacks, so you’re always shifting in size as you progress.

Although at times The Ooze might be so bad it would earn itself a drop into the nearest bin, it is redeemed somewhat by its later levels. These appear to have been a desperate saving throw by the game to avoid an Atrocious rating, as they helped show that for all its faults, it’s a functional game that can have a few moments where you feel like you’re manoeuvring the Ooze in an interesting way. Because of this, The Ooze does not stand amongst the worst of the worst and is an oddity every Mega Drive collector should have in their collection. ■

THE
©1995 SEGA
ALL RIGHTS
RESERVED
OOZE
TM

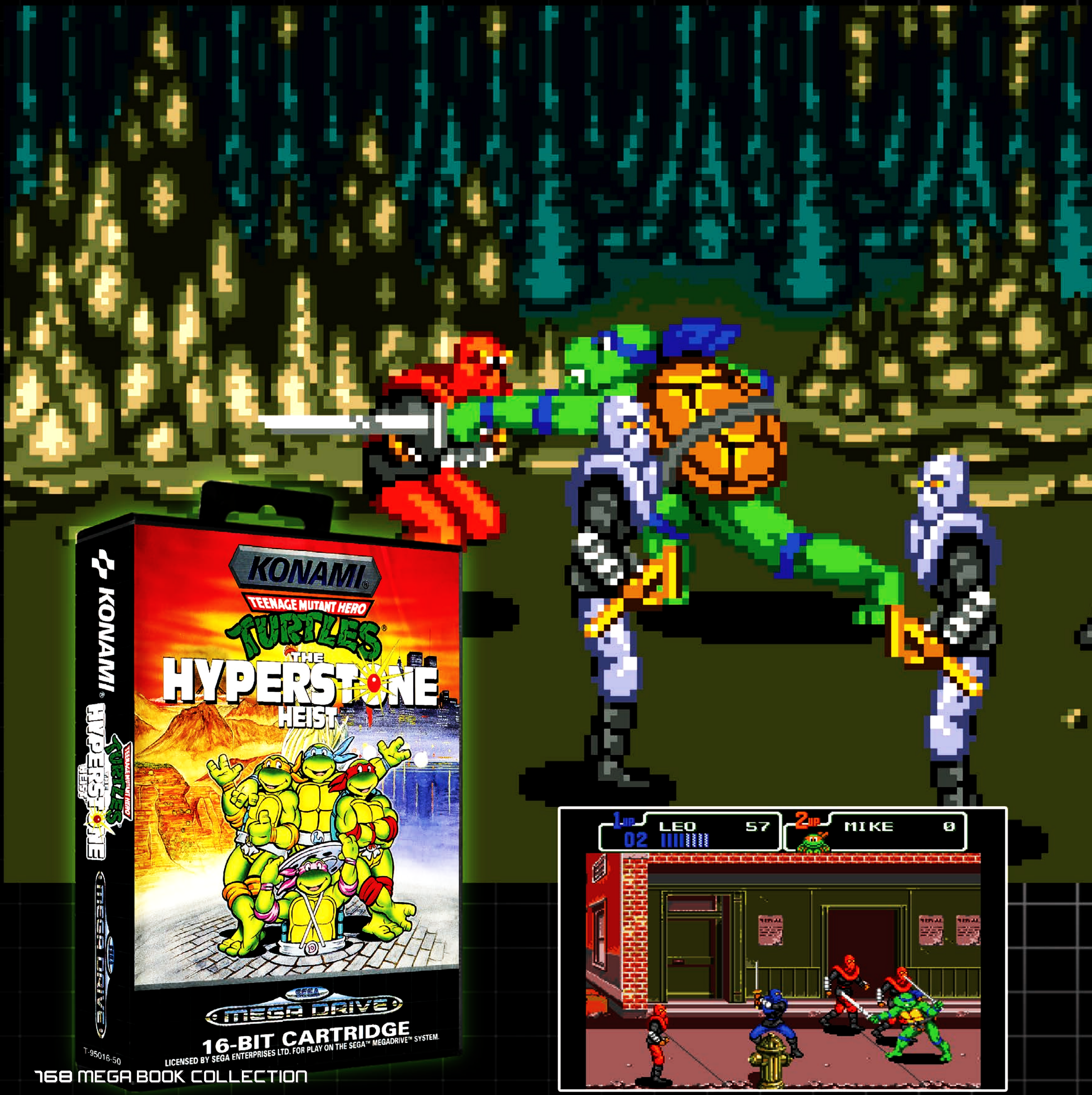
Title:
The Ooze

Genre:
Puddle of Slime Revenge Action Title

Developer:
Sega Technical Institute

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega

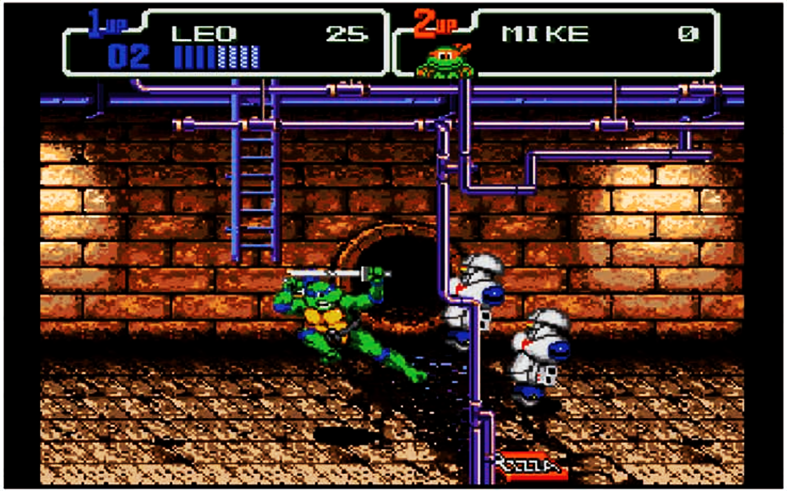

KONAMI
TEENAGE MUTANT HERO
TURTLES
THE
HYPERSTONE
HEIST
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD. FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA™ MEGADRIVE™ SYSTEM.
T-95016-50
1UP
LEO
57
02
2UP
MIKE
0

TMHT: The Hyperstone Heist -

Here we have the first game based on the TMNT to enter the Genesis/ Mega Drive library, The Hyperstone Heist. This game is inspired by the Turtle's second arcade title, Turtles in Time but it is not a direct port of that title. This title has fewer levels than the arcade game, though the levels have been made longer to compensate for this. The story has April O'Neil reporting from Ellis Island when there is a sudden flash of light. Much to her surprise (and that of her audience), Manhattan Island starts shrinking! It is at this point that Shredder takes control of the airwaves to announce to the world that he has obtained a treasure from Dimension X, the Hyperstone.

Of course, the TMNT will not let Shredder get away with this plan. The Turtles have to survive five different stages in order to reach Shredder: New York City, A Mysterious Ghost Ship, Shredder's Hideout, The Gauntlet, and The Final Shell Shock. Through these levels the Turtles will fight all sorts of ninjas until they reach the final boss. The bosses are characters from the TV show who work with Shredder such as "Rocksteady" and "Baxter Stockman". Eliminating these guys is not an easy task! Hyperstone can be played by one or two players simultaneously and you're allowed to choose which Turtle you want to be. The game graphics are good as is the music but the voice samples sound garbled. Nonetheless, this is a fun side-scrolling beat 'em up that fans of the TMNT will enjoy. Kawabonga! ■

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO
TURTLES®
THE
HYPERSTONE
HEIST
PRESS START BUTTON
© 1993 KONAMI
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



Title:
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtle: The Hyperstone Heist

Genre:
Arcade Action TV Show Tie-in Title

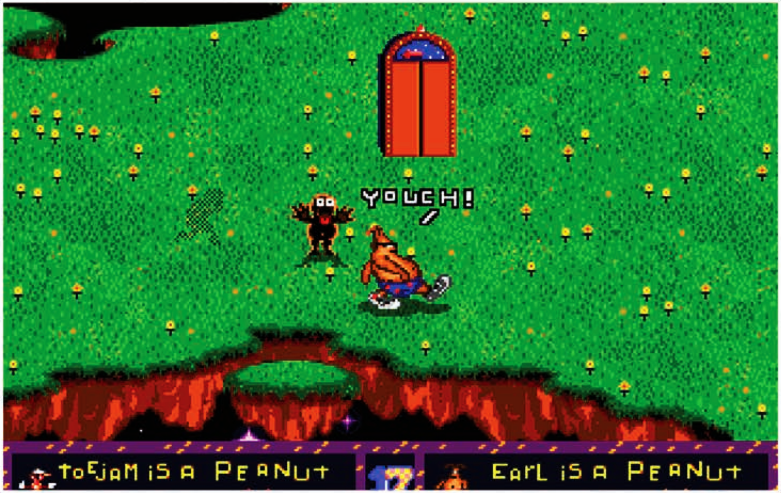
Developer:
Konami Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Konami

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
ToeJam & Earl in
PANIC ON FUNKOTRON
TM
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

15
ToEjaM
EarL

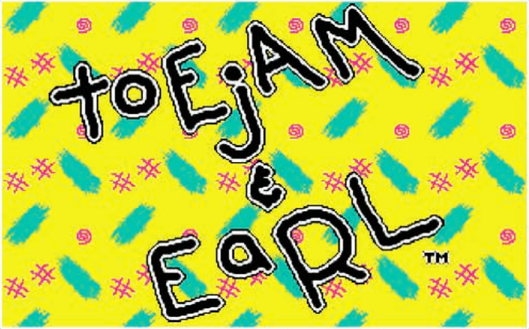


ToeJam & Earl -

Panic on Funkotron

This is one of the wackiest rogue-like games to ever be made. Toejam and Earl are two fashion conscious aliens with the speech patterns of stereotypical surfers. They crash land on planet Earth and it’s up to the player to guide them through procedurally generated islands to retrieve their spaceship components. When all the parts are gathered, they’ll be able to return to their home world aptly named ‘Funkotron’.

While the random level layouts challenge the players navigation skills, the Earth’s inhabitants act as enemies and will hinder Toejam & Earl at every opportunity. The game is full of humour and the humans here are blatant caricatures of suburban culture. Obviously this isn’t cool for Toejam & Earl, so it makes sense to avoid the people as much as possible. The game’s soundtrack is a mix of hip hop and jazz style tunes, which really sells the attitude of the main characters. Characterization of the aliens is integral to the game. When playing with a friend, Toejam & Earl will quip one-liners to each other. All of this worked to cement the game as a cult classic, and it’s one of the more unique titles published by SEGA. ■



Title:
ToeJam & Earl: Panic on Funkotron

Genre:
Side Scrolling Action Adventure Title

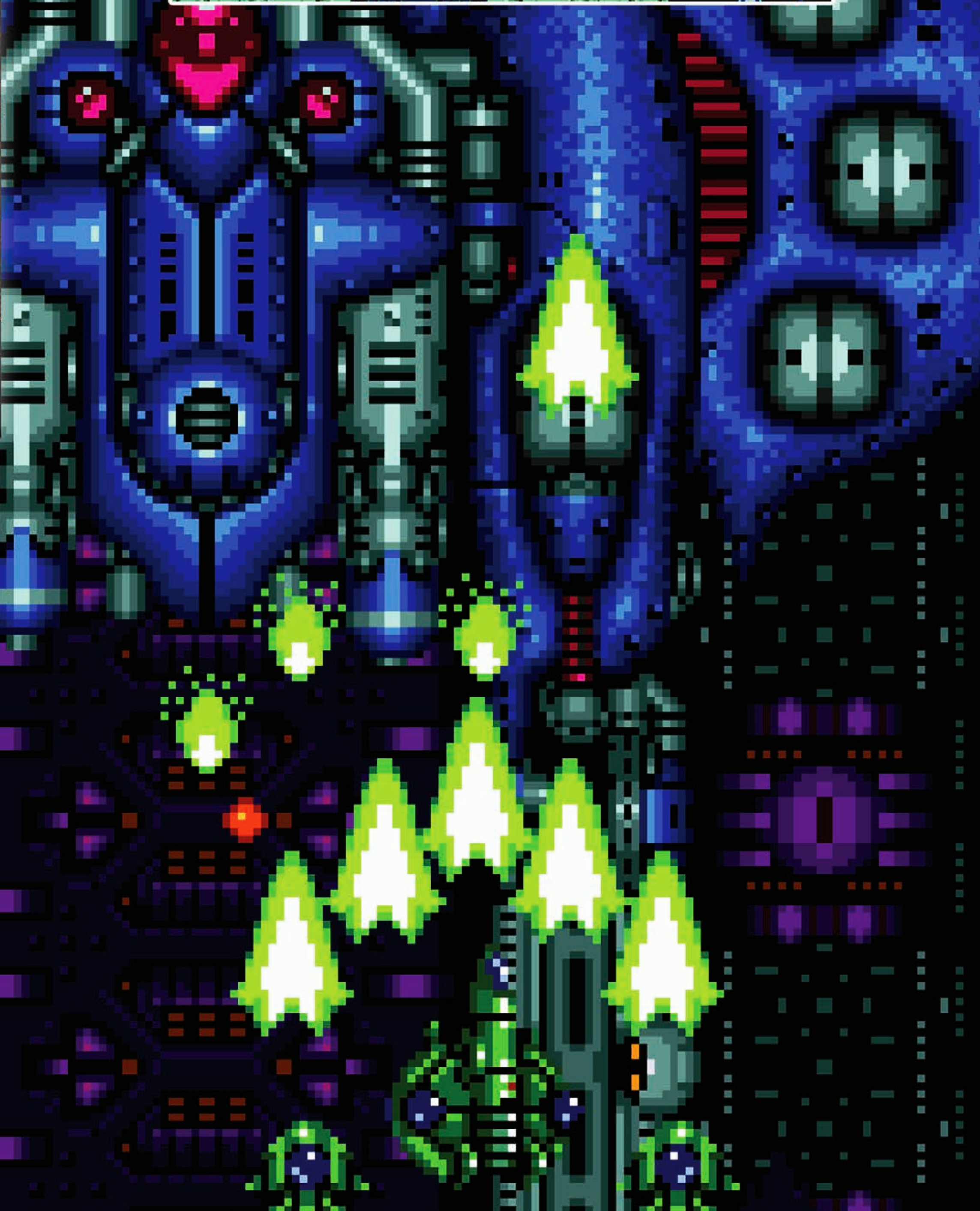
Developer:
Treasure Co., Ltd.

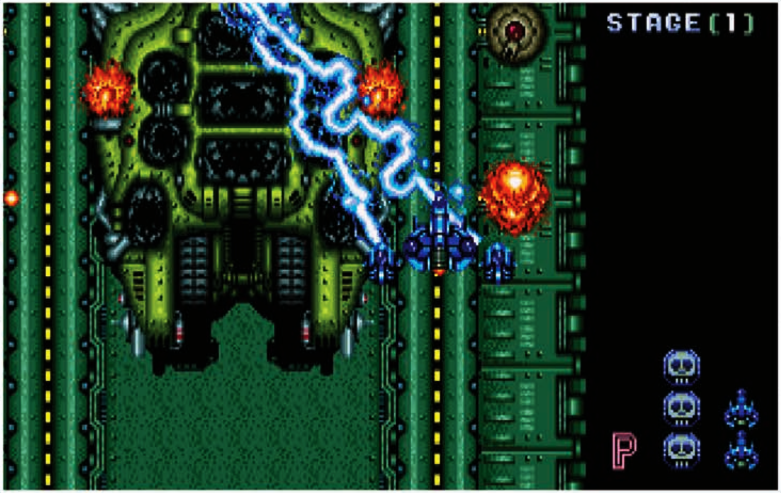
Year Released:
1994

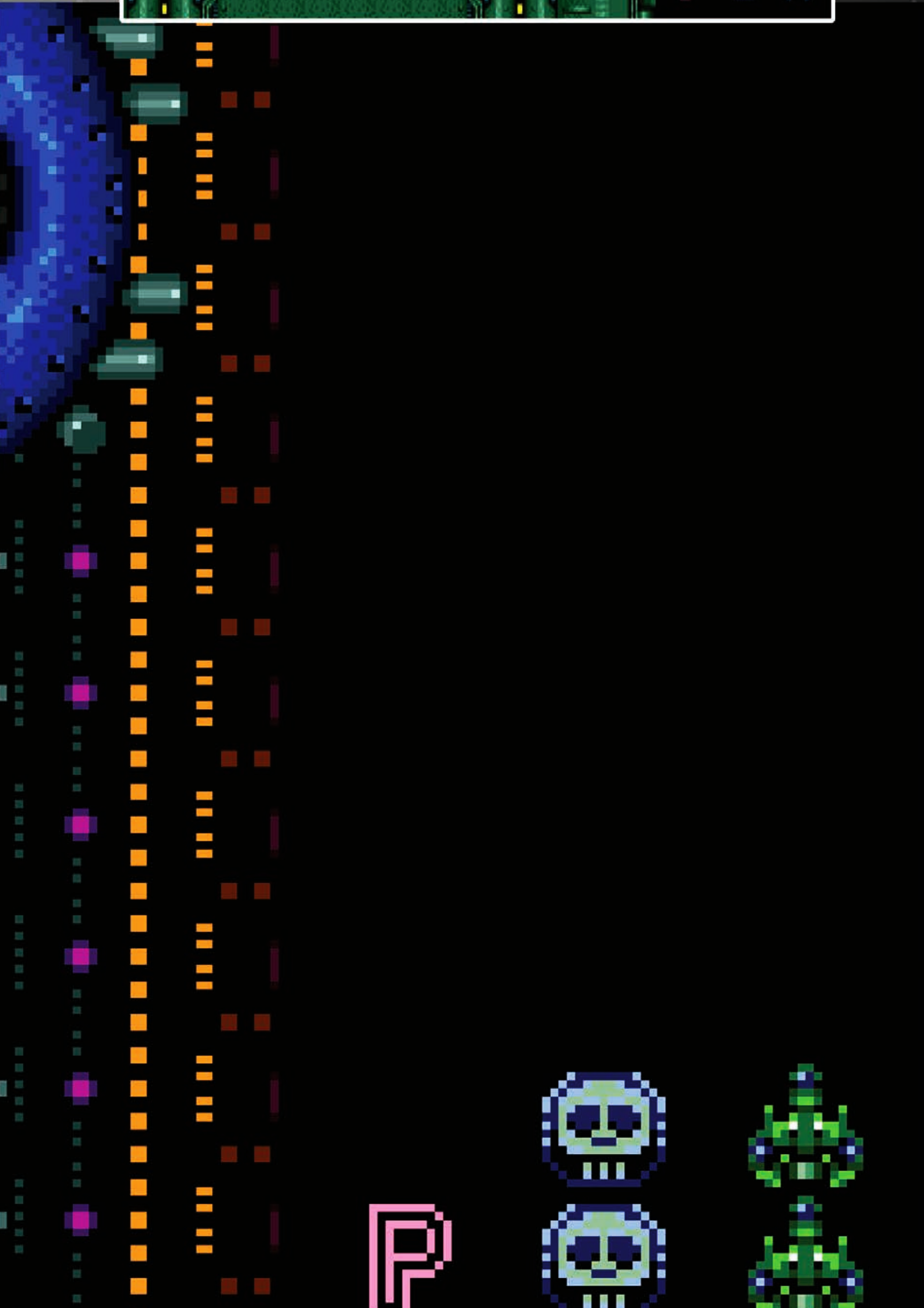
Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
TRUXTON™
MEGA DRIVE
TRUXTON™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

0
EASY
ROUND[1]
STAGE[1]



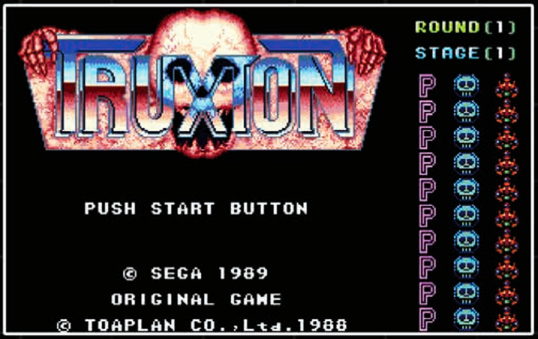




Truxton -

After garnering success in the arcades a year prior, Truxton was ported to the SEGA Megadrive in 1989. While it wasn't a commercial success in the west, it has secured cult classic status and is still a blast to play today. It's a vertical scrolling shoot 'em up with five different levels, each with its own boss battle and distinctive environment. Game producer and composer Masahiro Yuge wanted to make a game that became easier as players memorized it. Truxton achieves this by using a checkpoint system, so player deaths allow them to replay from a recent position. This wasn't very common in the genre, and by placing secret power-ups through each section, players who could remember their locations were granted a superior experience.

Those with strong memorization are rewarded with an appealing power fantasy, unlike other popular shooters. By gathering these power-ups, the ship gathers different weapons, faster movement speed and allow players a higher chance of success in the boss battles. To balance this, the player dies upon being hit and sacrifices all upgrades and must replay from the closest checkpoint. Practice makes perfect and Truxton really rewards players who take this notion to heart. ■



PUSH START BUTTON

© SEGA 1989
ORIGINAL GAME
© TOAPLAN CO.,Ltd.1988

Title:
Truxton

Genre:
Vertical Arcade Shoot'em up

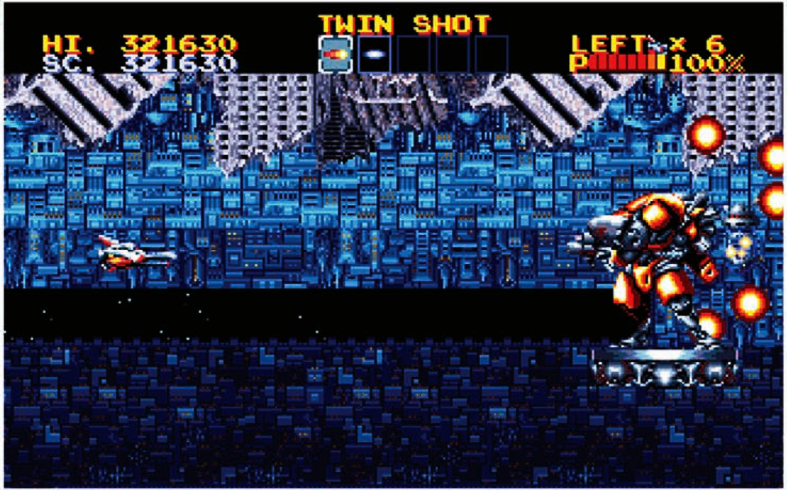
Developer:
Toaplan Co., Ltd.

Year Released:
1989

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
THUNDER FORCE IV
THUNDER FORCE IV
Technosoft.
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

HI. 68000
SC. 56600
TWIN SHOT
LEFT
P 76%



Thunder Force IV-

The fourth title of an already popular series, Thunder Force IV has a lot of pressure to be good. Fortunately, it soars past good and lands itself firmly in the shoot 'em up hall of fame. Fans will also recognize the series' traditional side-scrolling gameplay. The most striking thing about this game is its presentation. This is a game with beautiful sprite work and top tier parallax scrolling. The environment impacts the look of the game, with day and night transitions and distortion when plunging into the underwater sections. The visuals are ambitious, but they are achieved to a very high standard.

Like the prior game in the series, the starting levels can be tackled in any order. Initially four are available but upon their completion, the game becomes a linear affair, until all ten stages are completed. Multiple playthroughs allow players to learn the attack patterns of the enemies, and those with a deft aim and precise movement can quickly cut through the multi-stage boss battles. Grabbing power-ups increases the player's fire power exponentially, but the game maintains its difficulty by instantly destroying the player if hit. It's a fair trade-off that pushes players to be their best. ■

THUNDER FORCE IV
©1992 Technosoft

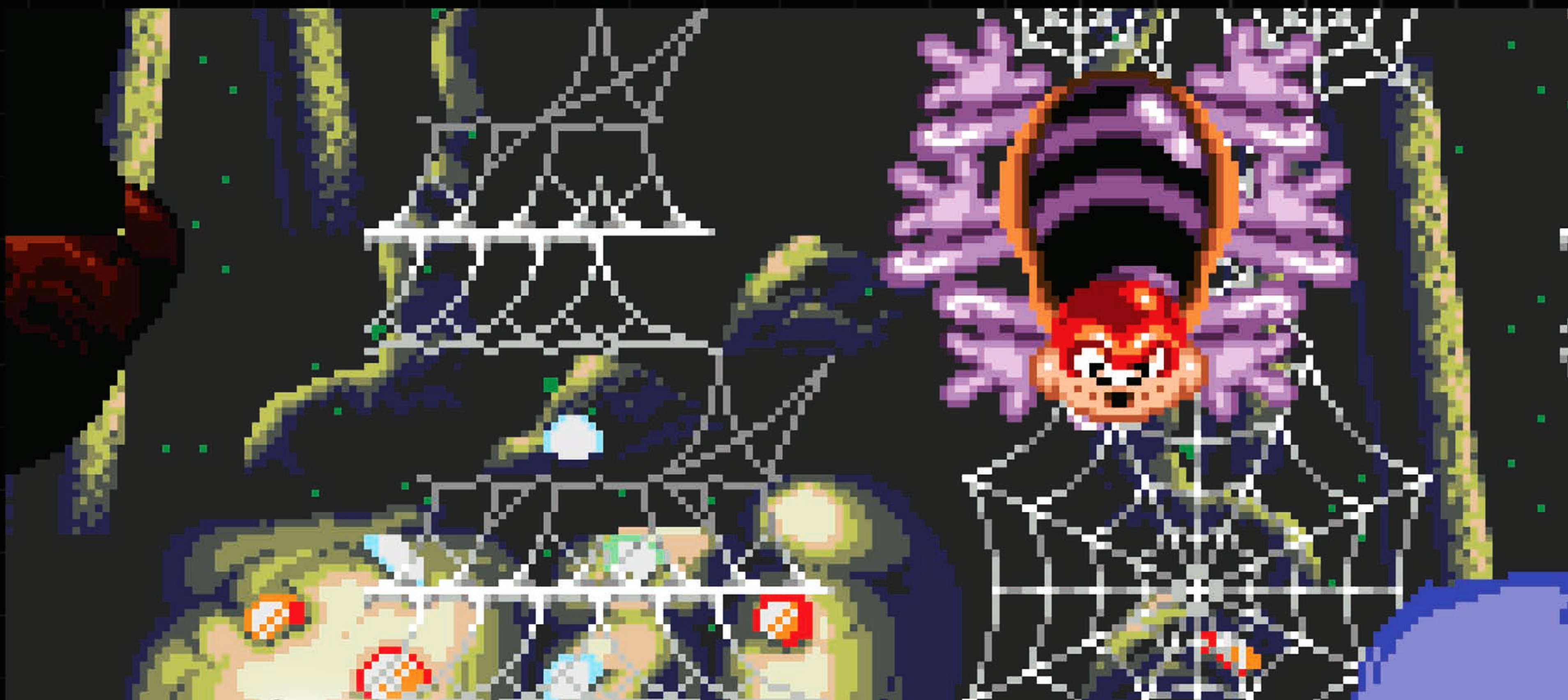
Title:
Thunder Force IV

Genre:
Horizontal Scrolling Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Technosoft Co., Ltd.

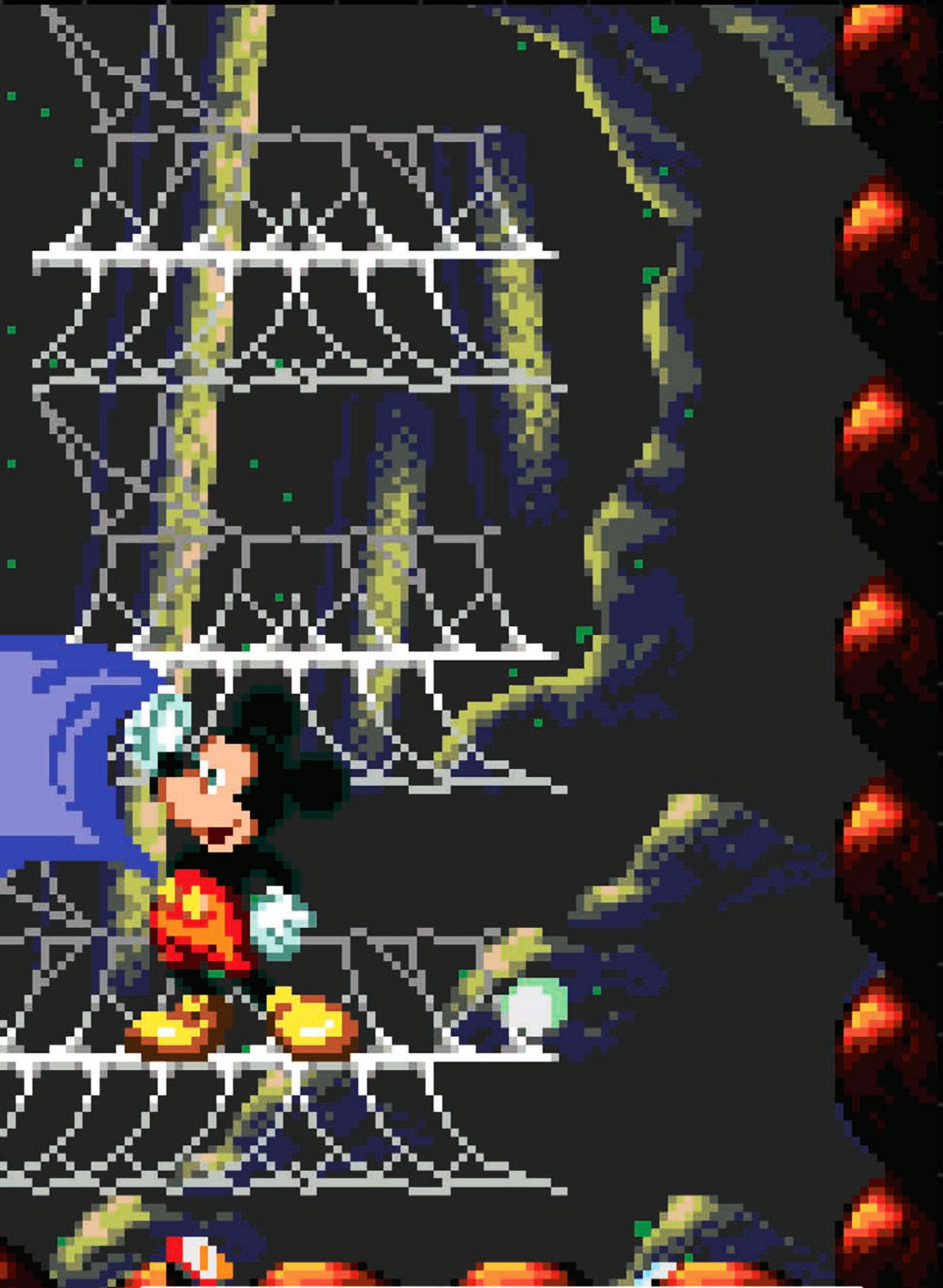
Year Released:
1992

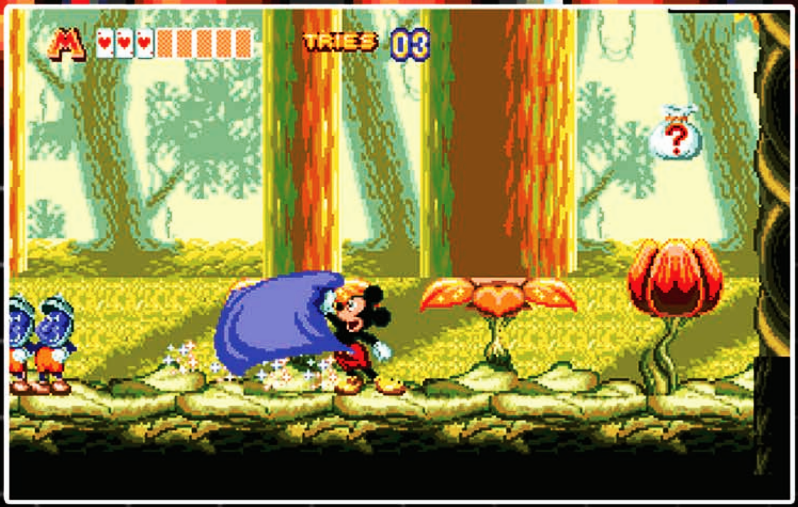
Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.



SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
WORLD OF ILLUSION
STARRING MICKEY MOUSE
AND Donald Duck
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGADRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SEGA

M
TRIES 03



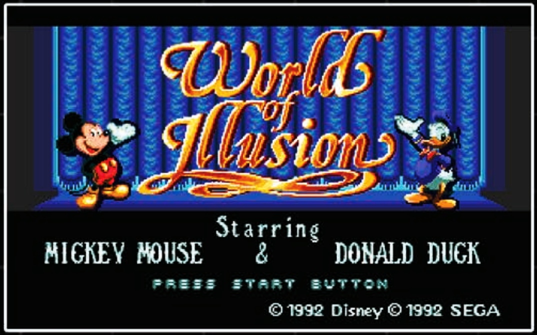


World of Illusion -

It's time to return to the realm of Illusion with our favourite mouse. This time Mickey Mouse teams up with good pal Donald Duck for a magical adventure in World of Illusion. Practising a magic act, Mickey and Donald discover a magical box which unbeknownst to them belongs to an evil magician. The pair are transported to a faraway world and must work together to find a way home.

Similar to Sonic 2, World of Illusion allows you to play solo as either Mickey or Donald or 2 player co-op play with both characters. They can run, jump and attack enemies with a trusty swish of their capes and depending on which character you choose, gameplay elements will change. After defeating an end-of-level boss, Mickey and Donald will learn a new spell such as flying on a magic carpet or floating in a bubble to help them progress to the next area.

The impressive visuals and animation take inspiration from classic Disney movies like Alice in Wonderland and The Little Mermaid and, like Castle of Illusion before it, the soundtrack is chock full of whimsy and charm. In short, World of Illusion is a charming platformer that perfectly captures that Disney magic and well worth adding to the collection. ■



World of Illusion

Starring

MICKEY MOUSE & DONALD DUCK

PRESS START BUTTON

© 1992 Disney © 1992 SEGA

Title:
World of Illusion: Starring Mickey Mouse & Donald Duck

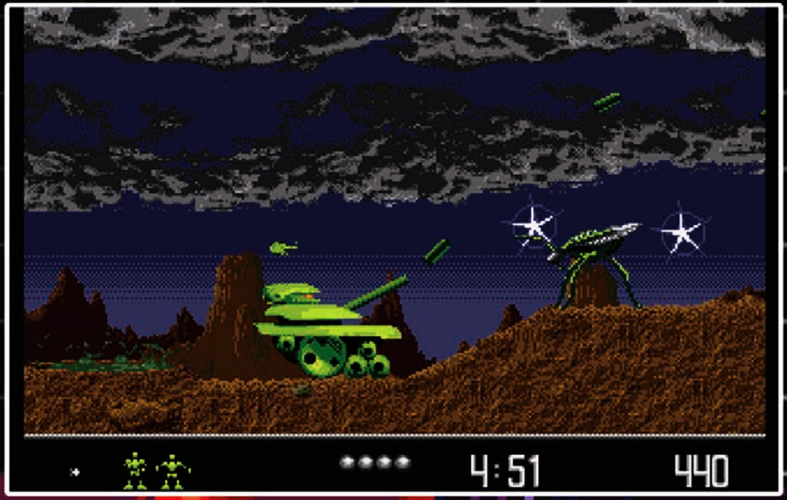
Genre:
Arcade Action Adventure Platform Title

Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
SEGA
VECTORMAN 2
VECTORMAN 2
GENESIS
GENESIS
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
SEGA
1843
1843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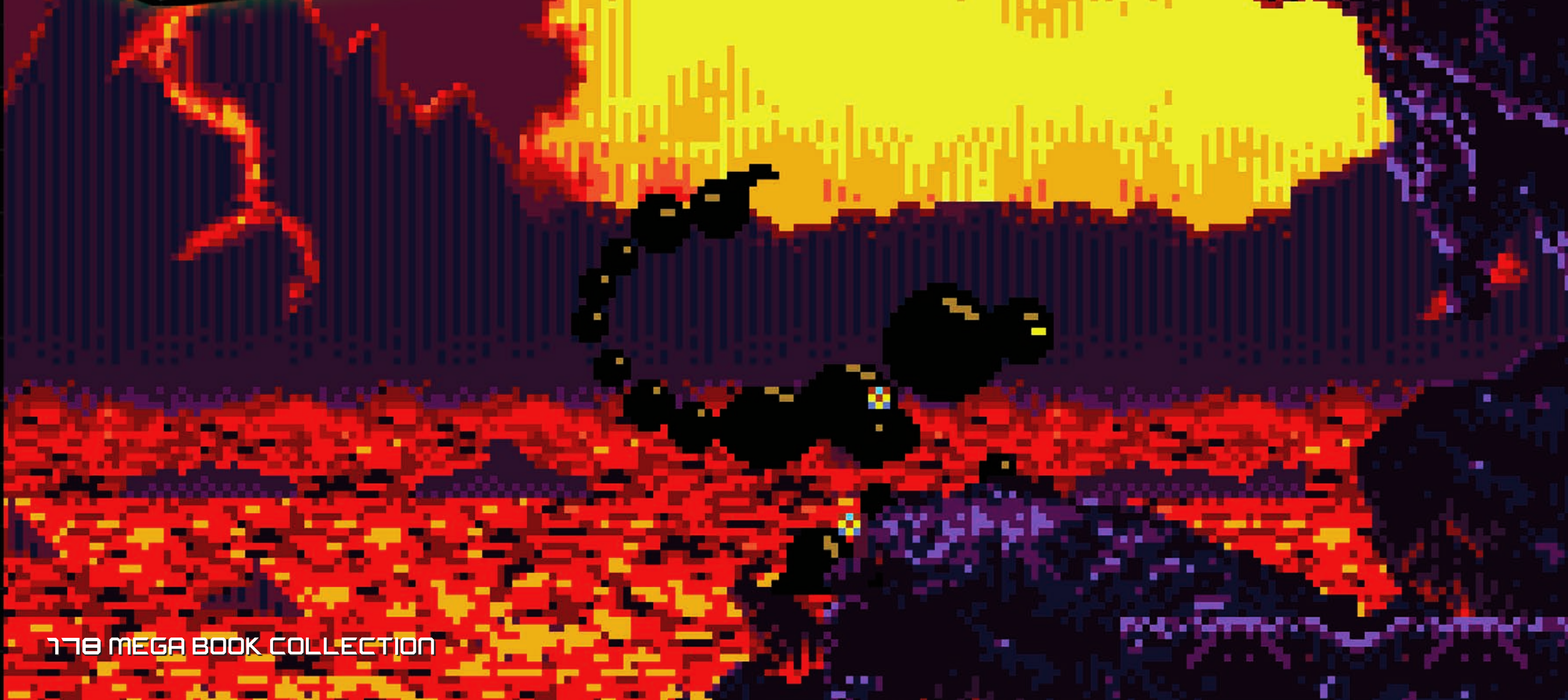
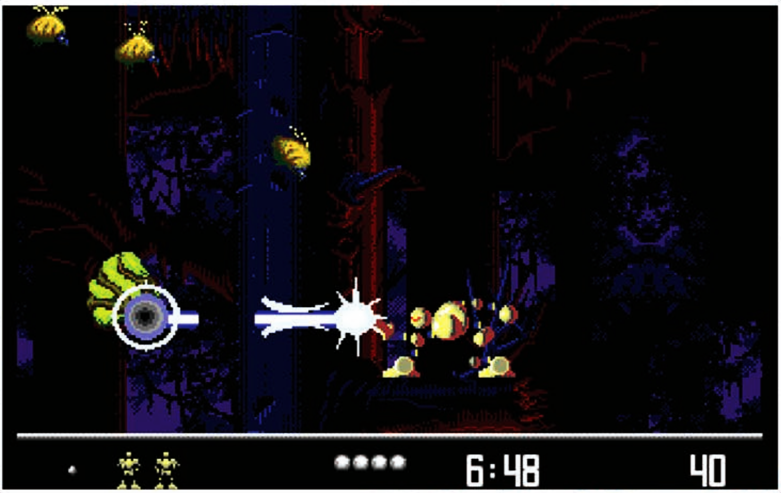




Vectorman 2 -

Some heroes just don't get a break! Immediately after saving Earth and defeating Warhead, VectorMan is once more on a routine barge excursion. Routine until a mysterious missile hits VectorMan's ship and critically damages it forcing him to freefall back to Earth. Once on the surface, VectorMan finds himself on the outskirts of what appears to be an abandoned Research Facility. Except, it is not abandoned! Hordes of mutant insects are flourishing in this facility and they appear to be under the control of some unknown intelligence that is using these mutant insects to damage the planet.

It falls to VectorMan to save the Earth once more. If you enjoyed the first VectorMan title, you are sure to enjoy this second outing. As in the first game, VectorMan can change shapes but in this game the "morphs" are level specific (except the Tornado morph). The morphs include the following: helicopter, skates, tornado, and tank. In addition to these, he can assimilate characteristics of his enemies if he picks up the assimilation icons released when these are destroyed. This means that VectorMan can use a shield, gain a stinger like a scorpion, charge like a rhino beetle, punch like a tick, or use a fireball like a fire ant. VectorMan 2 has beautiful graphics, great sound effects and a nice musical score. Overall this is a very good follow up to the original. ■

VECTORMAN™
TM & © 1996 SEGA.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
2
START
OPTIONS

Title:
Vectorman 2

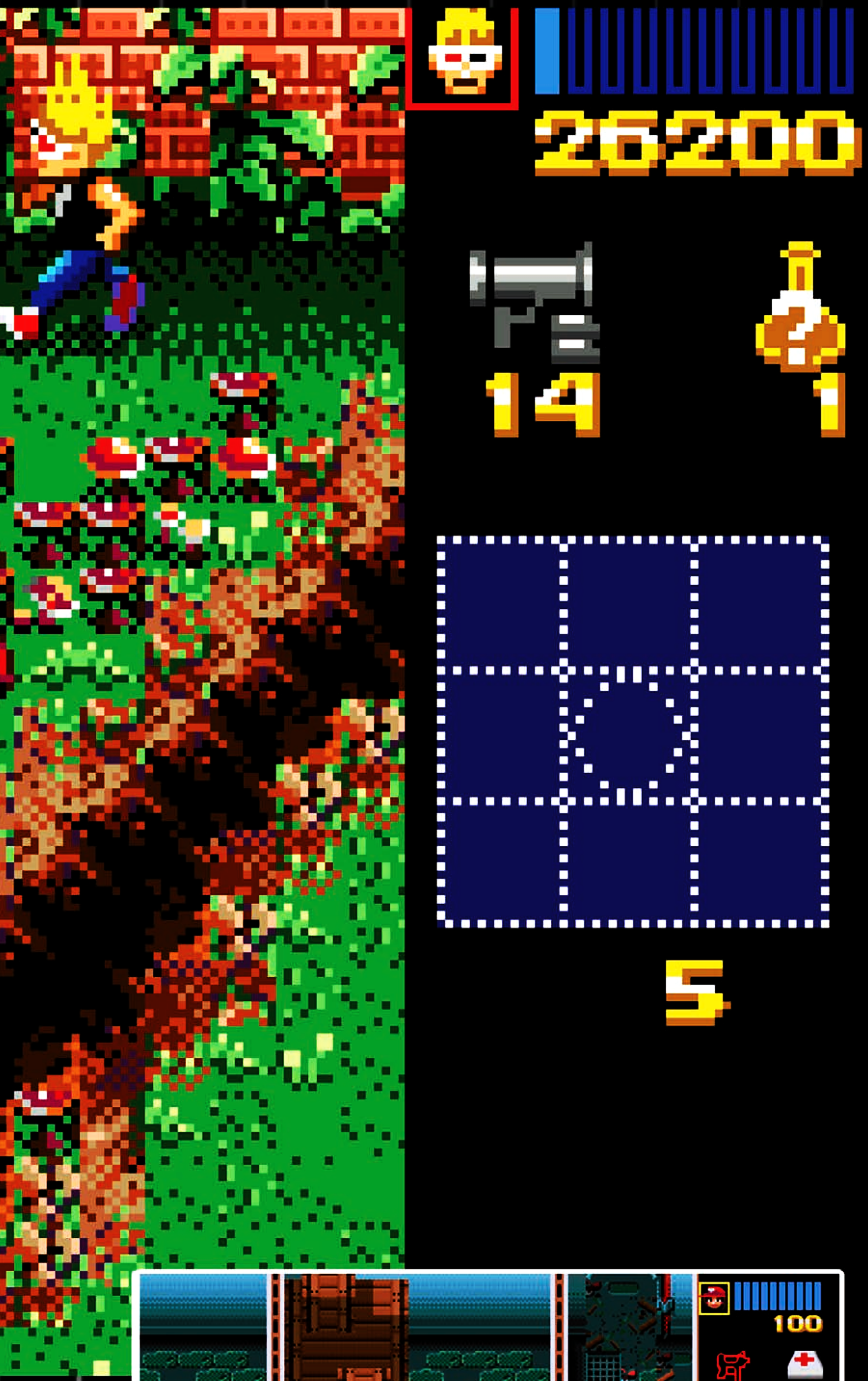
Genre:
Arcade Action Platform Title

Developer:
BlueSky Software, Inc.

Year Released:
1996

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

KONAMI
ZOMBIES ATE MY NEIGHBORS
SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
2810
85
1
7

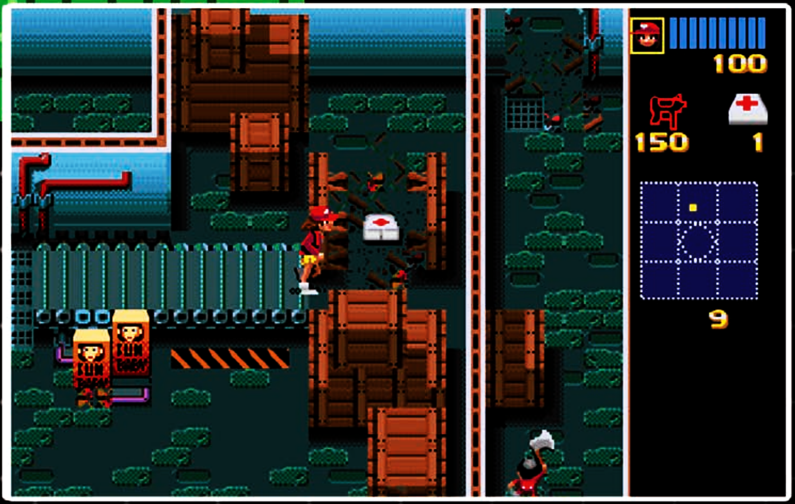


Zombies Ate My Neighbors -

Zeke and Julie have to save their neighbors from a wide range of horror movie monsters across the 48 massive scrolling levels in this hilarious cult classic. The top down view takes in backyards, shopping malls, an Egyptian tomb and a software company office (featuring a cameo from George Lucas). The game underwent censorship in Europe and Australia, changing the name to Zombies and blood becoming purple gore. Useful items are lying around: keys to open doors, health packs restore health, potions give temporary boosts and many weapons to use beyond the basic “squirt gun” with its infinite ammo. The Uzi, weed whacker, exploding soda cans and bazooka all kill in different ways.

Neighbors are killed on contact with the enemy, a life is lost if all the neighbors are killed and reaching certain points in the game awards an extra neighbor. Seven hidden bonus levels can be found, including one based on the LucasArts game Day of the Tentacle. A password system allows you to save progress, taking account of the number of neighbors saved (but not items carried). Critical acclaim sadly did not mean high sales, and the sequel Ghoul Patrol was not as well received. ■

ZOMBIES
ATE MY
NEIGHBORS
START
PASSWORD
OPTIONS



Title:
Zombies Ate My Neighbors

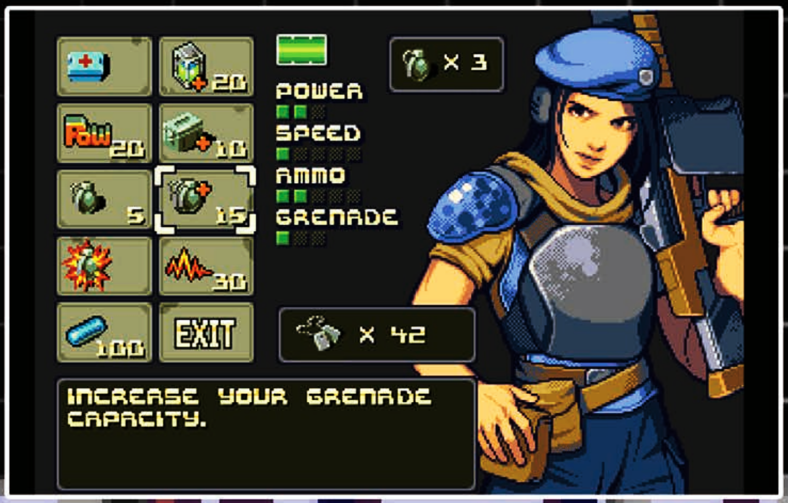
Genre:
Arcade Action Gun ‘n’ Run Co-Op Title

Developer:
LucasArts

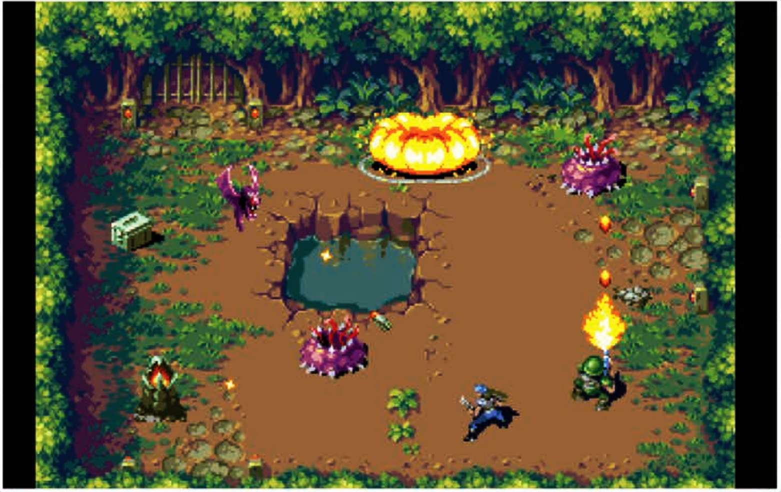
Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Konami

16-BIT
BITMAP BUREAU
XENOCRISIS
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
bitmap bureau


20
POW 20
10
5
15
30
100
EXIT
POWER
SPEED
AMMO
GRENADE
× 3
× 42

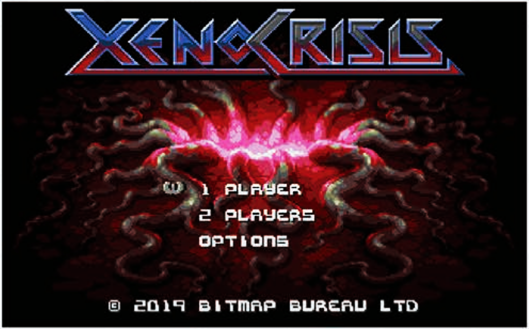
INCREASE YOUR GRENADE CAPACITY.



Xeno Crisis -

Possibly the newest Mega Drive game available at the time of writing, Xeno Crisis is a fun game and a wonderful homage to Smash TV. Available on a number of formats including PS4 and Dreamcast, it's on the 16-bit that it's most at home. Smash TV failed to land a punch on the Mega Drive. It was clunky, blurry, and difficult to control in comparison to its rival port on the SNES. Xeno Crisis is none of those things. Bitmap Bureau have created a game which has the same premise (travel from room to room annihilating foes while picking up power-ups and goodies) but everything looks and sounds better.

It's a tough game made tougher by finite ammo and unrelenting bosses. The creators were clearly fans of the Alien movies (which is no bad thing) and the Mega Drive's limited colour palette helps give the game a moody/almost gloomy look. Local co-op is a joy and almost a necessity to get anywhere. Xeno Crisis is one of those games which will melt your brain if you play it all day. Take it in small doses, keep upgrading those marines, and you might just make it to level two. Good luck! ■



Title:
Xeno Crisis

Genre:
Arcade Action Arena Gun 'n' Run Title

Developer:
Bitmap Bureau

Year Released:
2019

Publisher:
Strictly Limited Games

MEGA-CD

THE FUTURE OF VIDEO GAMING MULTI-MEDIA HAS ARRIVED.

The Mega-CD originally launched in Japan in late 1991. It would make its way West with a North American release in late 1992, where it would be known as the Sega CD, before reaching Europe and Brazil during the first half of 1993. There are two distinct mainline models of this console. The first is often referred to as the Model 1 and sat underneath the Genesis/Mega Drive, while the second release was designed to be cheaper and sat beside it. Outside of these releases, there was also a standalone unit known as the Sega CDX, a portable design that had both the Genesis and Sega CD built together and released in 1994 in North America and 1995 in Europe. It would be renamed the Multi-Mega in Europe, before being renamed again (as the Multi-Mega CDX) for its release in Brazil. Other companies would also get into releasing Sega CD hardware: we'd see Victor's Wondermega （ワンダーメガ） combo unit, which itself would see a few variations. There's 1992's RG-M1, which was loaded with karaoke functionality and had built-in S-video output. This unit retailed at an astonishing 83,000 yen, a price that would be well over $700/€637.60/£542.14 by today's exchange rates. A follow-up, the RG-M2, was released a year later and was a complete redesign. This unit was smaller, had infrared wireless controllers and was much cheaper.

JVC X-EYE Console

The RG-M2 would make its way to Japan and North America in 1994, although it would lose the wireless controllers, the S-video port and be renamed the JVC X'Eye. There was a revision to this design shortly after that removed the nine pin AV port breaking 32X compatibility in the process. In 1993, Pioneer would release the LaserActive LaserDisc player. This behemoth had the ability to be upgraded with add-on modules, one of which supported the Genesis/Mega Drive and Mega-CD software. It also allowed the use of Mega LD software or games that would play on the LaserDisc format. This thing was extremely expensive when it launched going for nearly $1,000/€689/£586 for the base unit.

The weird and wonderful versions of the Sega CD didn't stop at the LaserActive. In 1994 Aiwa would release the CSD-G1M, more commonly referred to as the Aiwa Mega-CD. This strange design was a portable stereo, which could dock with a specially designed add-on that provided Sega Mega Drive and Mega-CD compatibility. The unit itself is very rare and was only released in Japan, and when one does pop up for sale, it often goes for a high asking price. The hardware of the Mega-CD was designed to complement the Genesis/Mega Drive. It adds another, faster Motorola 68000 CPU to assist the one already in the Mega Drive. It also adds sprite and background scaling and rotation effects, something that Mega Drive could not do by itself. The Mega-CD/Sega CD also added additional sound channels and, of course, CD-quality music.

When a Mega-CD/Sega CD game put together all the elements of its hardware, it could be something truly spectacular. However, the quality and diversity of the library of the Mega-CD/Sega CD is often overshadowed by the poor performance of its hardware sales. Many will say Sega didn't support the add-on, leading to lower consumer confidence in this new media. We don't agree with this as the Mega-CD/Sega CD would see over 200 games released in just under its four years' lifespan.

Victor
WONDERMEGA
RG-M1
Victor Wonder-Mega RG-M1 Console

MULTI-MEGA
CDX
Multi-Mega CDX (European Version)

Victor
WONDERMEGA
RG-M2
Victor Wonder-Mega RG-M2 Console

This add-on had dozens of games that were worth experiencing and owning, and many more that were the best versions of multi-platform games. While its library was nowhere near the size of a standalone console, its games were meant to complement the Mega Drive's library and cover games and features the Genesis/Mega Drive simply wasn't capable of pulling off on its own. But Sega was to

MEGA DRIVE
SEGA
MEGA-CD
VOLUME
RESET
POWER

blame for the overall negative public perception of the Mega-CD/Sega CD in the West. The entire advertising campaign was based around FMV (Full-Motion Video) games. While these games had an exciting appeal of being new, they were never accepted by the mainstream audience and, coupled with the incredibly high pricing of the hardware, simply weren't enough to draw consumers in. Worse, the Mega-CD's incredible sprite and background manipulation hardware was hardly ever used by Sega themselves. Even when a game was released that had these features, it was never shown off by Sega. Digging a little deeper, another problem Sega had was the fact that many of the Mega Drive's staple franchises never made their way onto the Mega-CD/Sega CD as unique releases: we'd see no Mega-CD exclusive Streets of Rage or Shinobi title, to name just two popular series of the time.

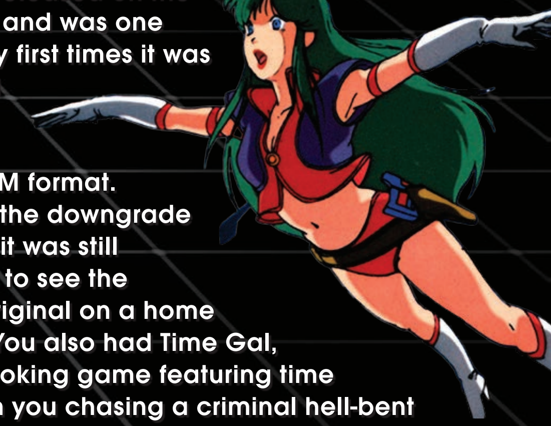
Sega never even ported over any of its exclusive Super Scaler arcade games for the console: where was Outrunners, Galaxy Force 2 or even an enhanced version of their great Jurassic Park title? These games visually would have stood head and shoulders above the software that was offered by the Mega Drive and Super Nintendo at the time. The library wasn't as completely underrated as some would have you believe, however. There were tonnes of multi-platform games that were at their best on the Mega-CD/Sega CD at the time. Everything from Traveller's Tales' Mickey Mania, with its expanded soundtrack and voice work; Capcom's Final Fight CD, with its two-player Co-Op and arcade faithful content; Earthworm Jim Special Edition, with its added level, weapons, animation, and absolutely incredible music; to Malibu Interactive's Batman Returns, with its technically breath-taking driving stages and movie-quality soundtrack. Where the Mega-CD/Sega CD truly shone was, of course, when a game was designed for it from the ground up. These games took the form of software that would either take advantage of the system sprite and background hardware or it would use the relatively huge storage size of the CD format to expand the experience well beyond a cartridge's capability.

MEGA-CD
SNATCHER
SEGA
Final Fight
EARTHWORM JIM Special
BATMAN RETURNS

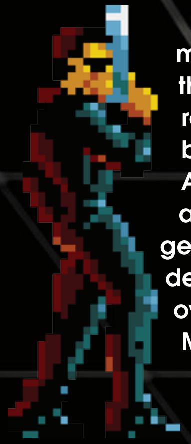
A selection of the amazing releases that appeared on the MegaCD and SegaCD

The RPG genre was well represented on the system, most notably with two Lunar games: Lunar: The Silver Star and Lunar: Eternal Blue. Both these games have excellent soundtracks, tonnes of voice work, great cinematics, and link the adventures to keep you busy. You couldn't play these titles on another console at the time, making their Mega-CD appearance an awesome addition to the library. Adventure games would also make a big splash on the console, and none more important than Konami's Snatcher, the brainchild of famed game designer Hideo Kojima. This title was loaded with voicework and set in 2047, a futuristic world where a new threat called Snatchers are killing people and assuming their identity. Often referred to as a graphic adventure game, this is the only version of Snatcher to see an official Western release for any system. There was nothing like it at the time, giving you a depth of story and adult theme well beyond anything else on the market.

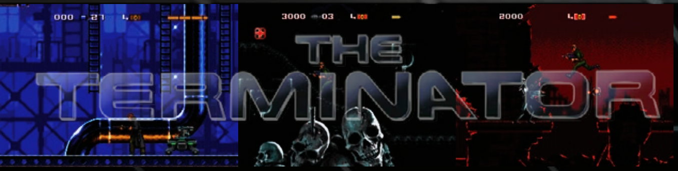
Not all full-motion video games for the Mega-CD/Sega CD were terrible: Road Avenger had a style and presentation you couldn't help but love, with you assuming the role of a widow hell-bent on avenging the loss and murder of his wife. It was driven by an excellent soundtrack and was one of the better playing full-motion video games at its release. We'd even go so far as to say it's probably the best version of this game available. Dragons Lair was also released on the Mega-CD and was one of the very first times it was published fully featured on CD ROM format. Even with the downgrade in colour, it was still awesome to see the arcade original on a home console. You also had Time Gal, a great looking game featuring time travel with you chasing a criminal hell-bent on changing the future. It was one of the better-looking FMV games at the time and did the arcade source material proud. While many of the full-motion video games on the Mega-CD/Sega CD eventually received better-looking versions elsewhere, seeing these games run on a home console in the early 1990s was truly impressive. The shoot 'em up genre is actually rock solid on the Mega-CD with many games you can't play a physical version of anywhere else. One of the best examples is Keio Flying Squadron, a colourful shooter with great graphics and sound that looks like nothing else on the system. Even its cutesy presentation couldn't turn us off this great playing experience.



Another great shoot 'em up was Robo Aleste (Dennin Aleste in Japan), with incredible music which drove solid gameplay across very well-designed stages and enemies. It doesn't get the credit it deserves but was definitely a boon to the Mega-CD/Sega CD library in 1993. You can't forget Silpheed either, one of the most graphically impressive games on the system back then. It overlaid polygonal ships on full-

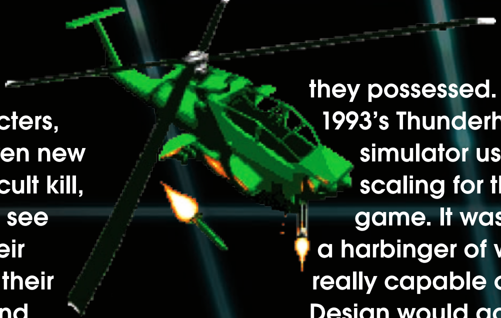


motion video backdrops, creating the illusion of some truly outstanding rendering. The soundtrack wasn't bad either. We also loved Android Assault, a great plane game, and another shoot 'em up that doesn't get the respect it deserves. Some developers wouldn't simply port over their cartridge releases to the Mega-CD/Sega CD instead opting to completely redesign their games. A great example of this is 1993's The Terminator, the Mega-CD version of which was a near-complete overhaul with new graphics, stage design, weapons, cinematics, and music from Tommy Tallarico. This side-scrolling run'n'gun was another excellent addition to the library and proof original software of existing IP could coexist on both the Mega Drive and Mega-CD successfully.



Even Sega was smart enough to realise that their new mascot shouldn't simply be dumped on their add-on with improved music and, in 1993, the Mega-CD would get a completely original entry, Sonic CD. Adding in a new dash mechanic, new time-travelling stages, and truly memorable music, this was our favourite 16-bit Sonic game. Each stage was crafted to be explored instead of just blasted through at top speed. In fact, you missed the entire point of the time-travelling additions by not exploring the game's levels fully. It also added bonus stages that use the Mega-CD scaling technologies, giving it a high class feeling above the other 16-bit entries. Another Sega property that would be overhauled for the Mega-CD was Eternal Champions. This would receive a tonne of additional content to the original release, to the point where it felt like a completely different game, and was titled Challenge from the Dark Side.

MEGA-CD
ETERNAL CHAMPIONS
CHALLENGE FROM THE DARK SIDE
SEGA

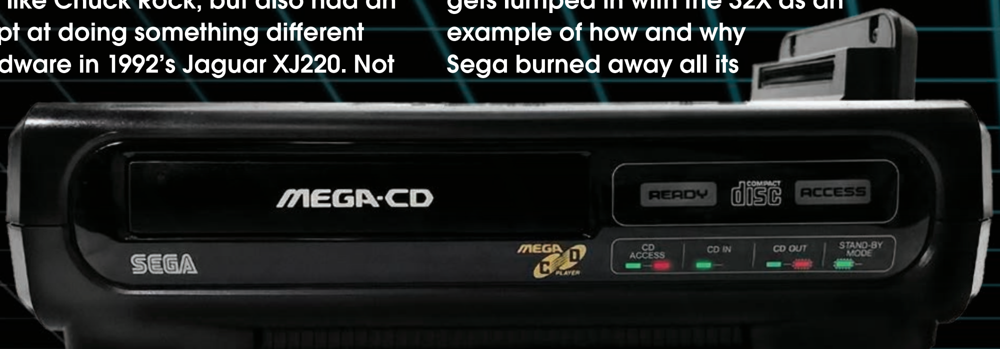


Sega would add new moves, characters, finishing moves, and even new Cinekills, a brutally difficult kill, where you would get to see your opponent meet their demise at the hands of their worst fear. It's a deep and underrated fighting game that the mainstream knows little about. Sega would also have the wherewithal to bring Spider-Man versus the Kingpin to the Mega-CD in 1993, a greatly enhanced port of their prior Mega Drive effort. This one gets better stage design, improved graphics and a much better selection of music. The ability to free roam the game map and choose your levels was a great change and was yet another example of how simple little touches taking advantage of the Mega-CD could add a tonne to an existing experience. It may surprise some of you, but the Japanese market was Sega's weakest in terms of overall sales of the Mega-CD.

Many games that were released in the West never saw a Japanese version, and strong Japanese exclusives were few and far between. One example is Devastator, a mech platformer, run'n'gun shoot 'em up hybrid that was fast and quite visually striking at the time. It's based on the enemy of the same name and is one we recommend if you have a Mega-CD or the means to play import software on your Sega CD. When it came to the technically impressive stuff, the use of hardware sprite scaling and rotation, the UK-based software company Core Design made the Mega-CD sing like no other.

They started with some tame software by porting stuff like Chuck Rock, but also had an early attempt at doing something different with the hardware in 1992's Jaguar XJ220. Not the most impressive driving game out there, but you could see the ambition they possessed. That would be realised with 1993's Thunderhawk, a helicopter combat simulator using the Mega-CD's hardware scaling for the entire presentation of the game. It was an excellent showpiece and a harbinger of what this machine add-on was really capable of doing. Then In 1994 Core Design would again wow Mega-CD owners with Soulstar, a shoot 'em up that would incorporate on rails and free-roaming stage design. This is one of the Mega-CD's most impressive technical showings and proves beyond a shadow of a doubt in our mind that if more games had looked and played like this, the Mega-CD library would have driven more sales of the hardware. Core Design would also show up strong with Battle Core, a mission-based free roaming mech shooter, that again relied on heavy use of the Mega-CD's specialised hardware for scaling sprites, which in turn created another unique looking and playing experience.

Their final release for the Sega CD would land in 1994. A spinoff from the Chuck Rock series, BC Racers used a similar graphic style to Nintendo's Super Mario Kart. This combat racer was exactly the type of software that should have existed for the Mega-CD from the outset: natural extensions of existing properties that would use the specialised hardware in ways the base Mega Drive/Genesis unit could never duplicate. All in all, Core Design's contributions to the Mega-CD library are undeniably some of its most unique and playable experiences. If you haven't played these games, you're missing a huge piece of what Mega-CD ownership was all about. Despite the success of the Genesis/Mega Drive platform, Mega-CD/Sega CD would only see about 2 million units sold worldwide in its entire lifetime and is often cited as Sega's first big misstep in the West. It gets lumped in with the 32X as an example of how and why Sega burned away all its



The Pal Add-on MegaCD Front View

MEGA-CD
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

CPU

MAIN CPU: MOTOROLA 68000 16BIT PROCESSOR RUNNING AT 12.5 MHZ
SAME AS THE MEGA DRIVE. ACTS AS A COPROCESSOR ALONG WITH THE MEGA DRIVE CPU.
BUS WIDTH: 16BIT
INSTRUCTION SET: 16BIT AND 32BIT INSTRUCTIONS. 16 REGISTERS

GRAPHICS

GPU GRAPHICS PROCESSOR: SEGA 315S548 CUSTOM ASIC
BUS WIDTH: 32BIT S2X 16BITT
BUS CLOCK RATE: 6.25 MHZ S25 MB/S BANDWIDTHT
NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS COLORS ON SCREEN: 64 (DEFAULT)
USING PROGRAMMING TRICKS, THIS LIMIT IS INCREASED TO 128 256 COLORS VIA RASTER EFFECTS.
128 256 COLORS CAN BE DISPLAYED ON SCREEN USING HAM TECHNIQUES

PLANES: 5 LAYERS

SEGA CD FMV LAYER
3 ENHANCED MEGA DRIVE LAYERS (SPRITE LAYER, 2 TILE LAYERS)
MEGA DRIVE BACK SCREEN

FULL MOTION VIDEO: VIDEO SIZE FROM 1/4 TO FULL SCREEN, ADVANCED COMPRESSION SCHEME, SOFTWARE BASED UPGRADE · ONSCREEN COLORS AVAILABLE IN CINEPAK AND TRU-VIDEO MODES: 128–256 COLORS.

AUDIO

THE MEGACD ADDS 10 SOUND CHANNELS TO THE 10 PROVIDED BY THE MEGA DRIVE'S SOUND CHIPS.
CD DIGITAL AUDIO · 2 CHANNEL STEREO · 44.1 KHZ SAMPLING RATE
16BIT PCM AUDIO DEPTH
RICOH RF5C164 S315S476AT PCM CHIP PROVIDES 8 SOUND CHANNELS.
SOUND FORMAT: 8BIT SIGN/MAGNITUDE MONAURAL PCM (WITH "STEREO" SUPPORT BY ALLOWING EACH CHANNEL TO HAVE DIFFERENT VOLUMES ON BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT CHANNELS) MAXIMUM SAMPLE RATE: 32 KHZ
PCM AUDIO DEPTH: 16BIT[3]

MEMORY

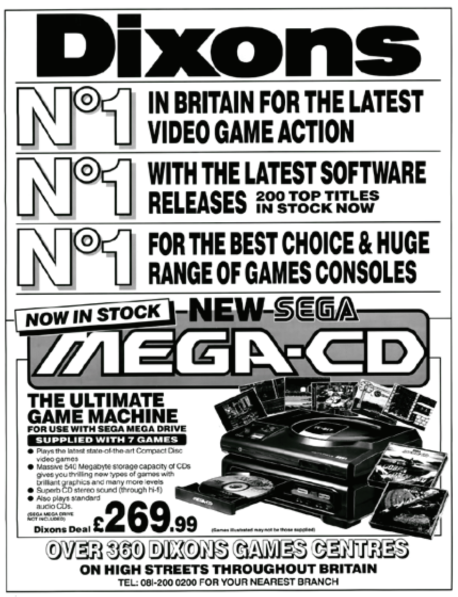
SYSTEM RAM: 856 KB
MAIN RAM: 4 MBIT (512 KB)
VRAM: 2 MBIT (256 KBT)
PCM AUDIO SAMPLES: 512 KBIT (64 KB)
CDROM DATA CACHE: 128 KBIT (16 KB)
INTERNAL BACKUP RAM: 64 KBIT (8 KB)

consumer confidence.

But is this perception of the Mega-CD a fair one? Or is this a narrative driven by people who never actually owned the system? Hindsight has a way of removing the original experience's strongest elements, often stripping away key points that could have only occurred during the actual life of the device. We feel there is no doubt that Mega-CD/Sega CD had their problems. The machine was expensive in every region it was released in, especially Japan where it retailed for over $500/€325/£299. Even when Sega brought it West, Mega Drive and Genesis owners stared at €325 or more as the barrier to entry, which means that in modern terms, the Mega-CD/Sega CD would have been hundreds of pounds more than even a PlayStation 4 in today's money.

Even with a perfect library of games, this would have been nearly an insurmountable obstacle to overcome. Sega also poured nearly all its marketing money behind full-motion video games. While these captured the imagination of potential buyers in the first few months, magazine reviews and word of mouth quickly cut short this momentum, often revealing these games to be short-lived experiences that were all over the place in terms of quality. Despite the undeniable problems Sega faced with the Mega-CD/Sega CD, we feel that the system was a great part of our 16-bit experience. It had a relatively large library of games available, some of which could easily be argued as milestones. There is a popular narrative among the uninitiated video gamer out there that Sega didn't support it properly, which simply isn't true. Sega released a fair number of games for the Mega-CD/Sega CD. And if Sega is to be accused of anything, it's simply that they didn't release the right kinds of games for the machine.

We, like many, wanted to see the Mega-CD do Super Scaler ports of Sega's popular arcade games like Outrunners. We wanted to see the Mega-CD do an exclusive entry to popular franchises like Streets of Rage. We still consider the Mega-CD to be an underappreciated device that had plenty of good games. It's easy to fall in line with the narrative that it has nothing to play, but we would completely disagree with this idea. That song is often sung by those who didn't own it. We would encourage you to find one of the many emulators that play Mega-CD software and give the system a chance to see what it was all about. You may discover that it gives you a lot more than you ever thought possible. ■



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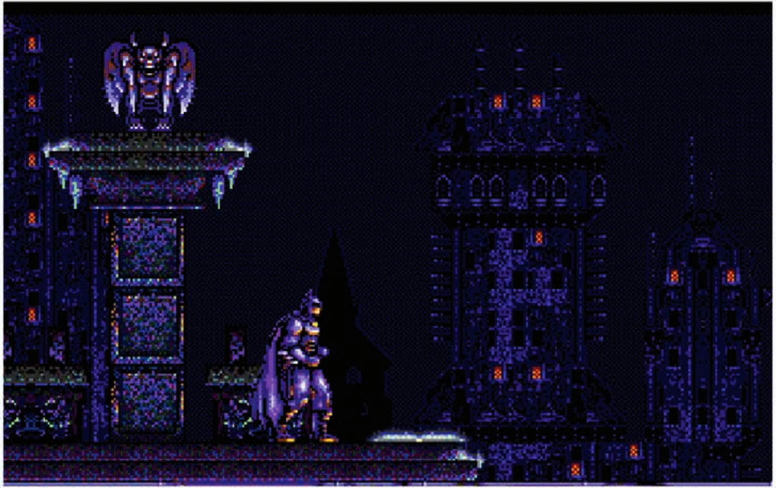
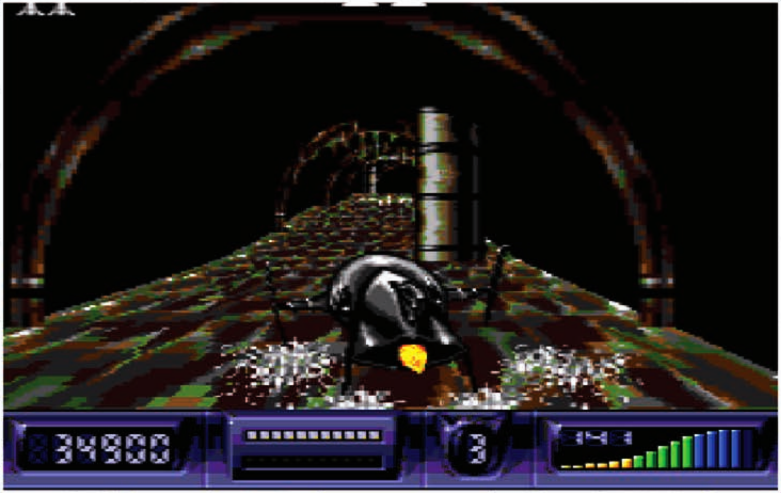
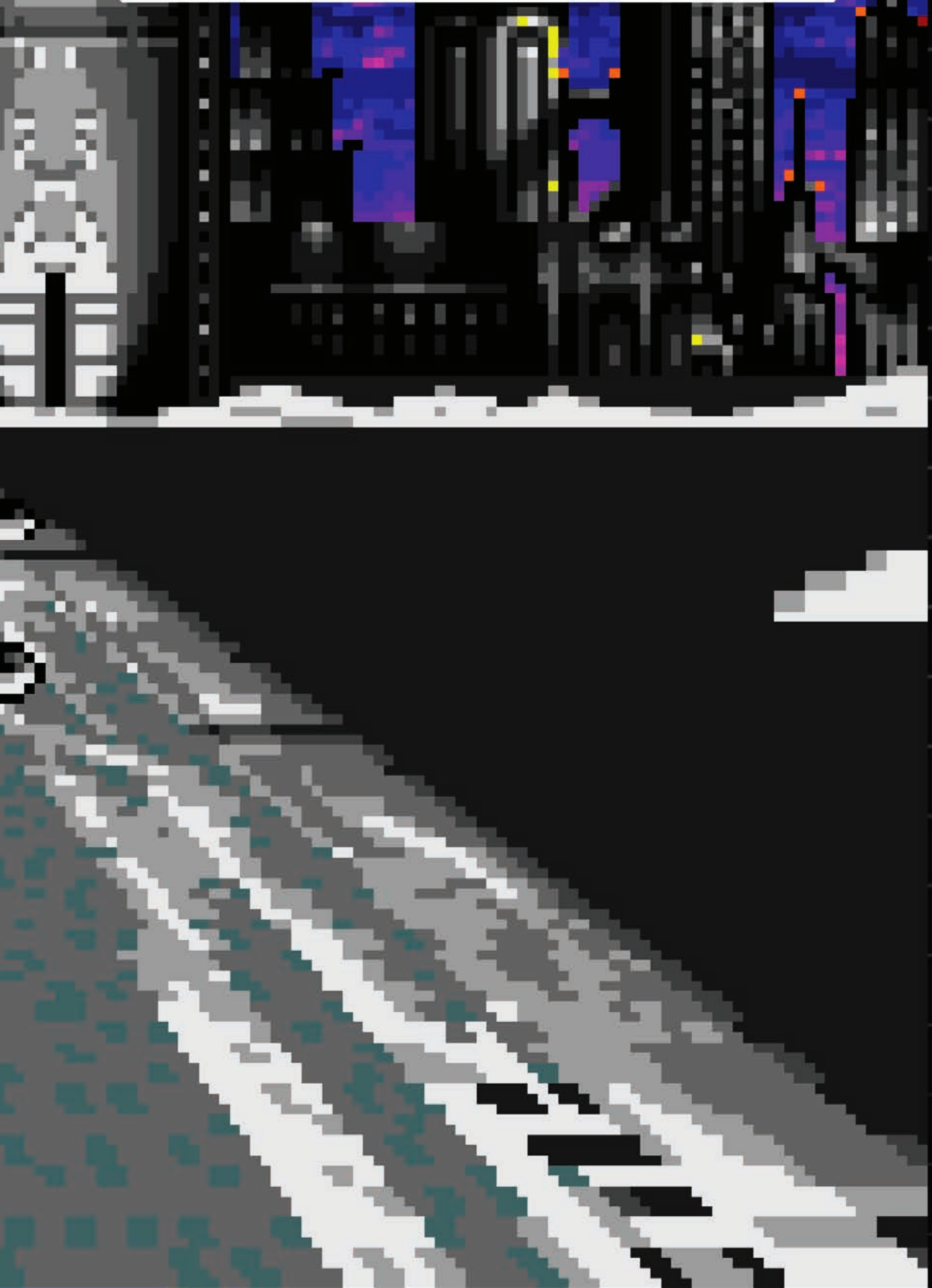
670-3533-50



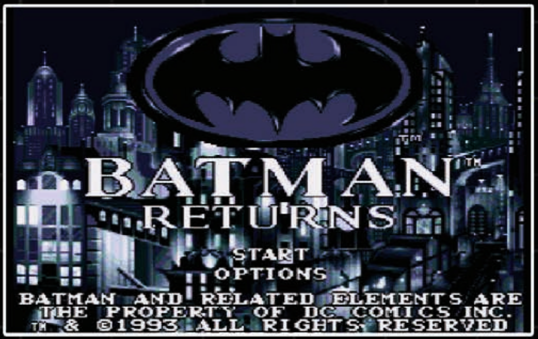




Batman Returns -

The platformer section of this Batman game could be found on the Mega Drive. As platformers go it was a movie tie in and you played Batman so it was a good starting point. This game however demonstrated why the Mega CD/ Sega CD was not just cash add on to an existing product. When writing this review I had genuinely forgotten the platform sections existed before going back to it.

This is not because they were bad, like I said you played Batman. The reason I forgot was you played those levels to get to the driving sections as they were unbelievably brilliant. Whether racing the clock through snowy woods or Gotham city. When you played a perfectly standard platformer as a chore to get to the driving sections you knew you were on to something special. With an amazing soundtrack, it felt like you were a part of that movie experience. This was reinforced by keeping the movie's narrative in place with ominous level designs working well in capturing Tim Burton's style. Batman Returns was not a perfect game by any stretch but it certainly demonstrated the potential of how the Mega CD / Sega CD gave a more in-depth gaming experience. ■


BATMAN™
RETURNS
START
OPTIONS
BATMAN AND RELATED ELEMENTS ARE
THE PROPERTY OF DC COMICS INC.
TM & ©1993 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

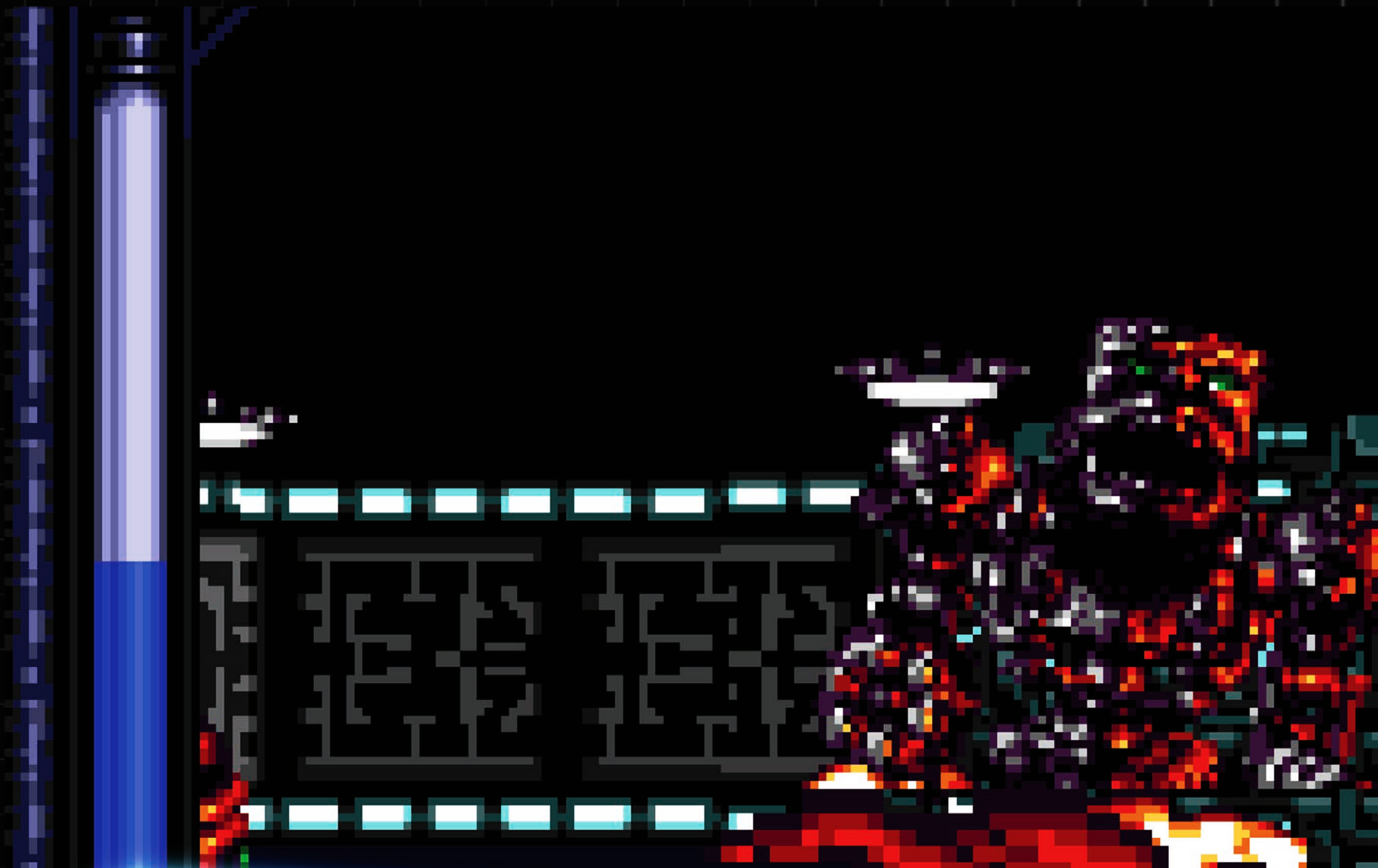
Title:
Batman Returns

Genre:
Action Adventure / 3D FPS Driving Title

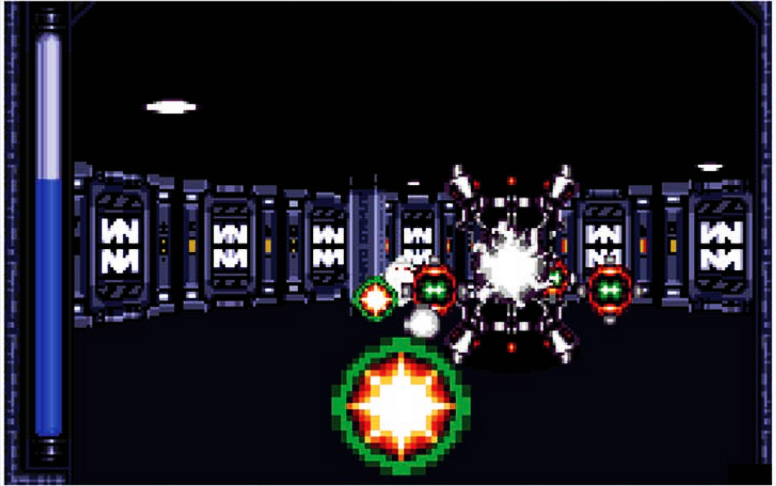
Developer:
Malibu Interactive

Year Released:
1992-93

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.



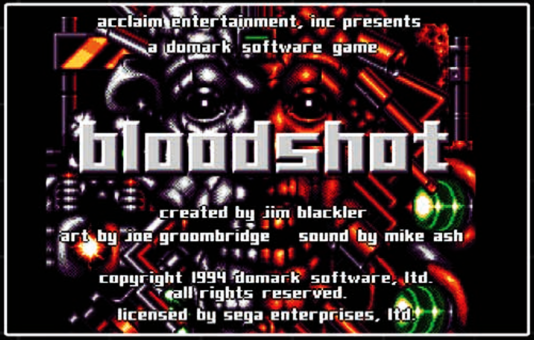
bloodshot
MEGA-CD
BLOODSHOT
DOMARK
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM

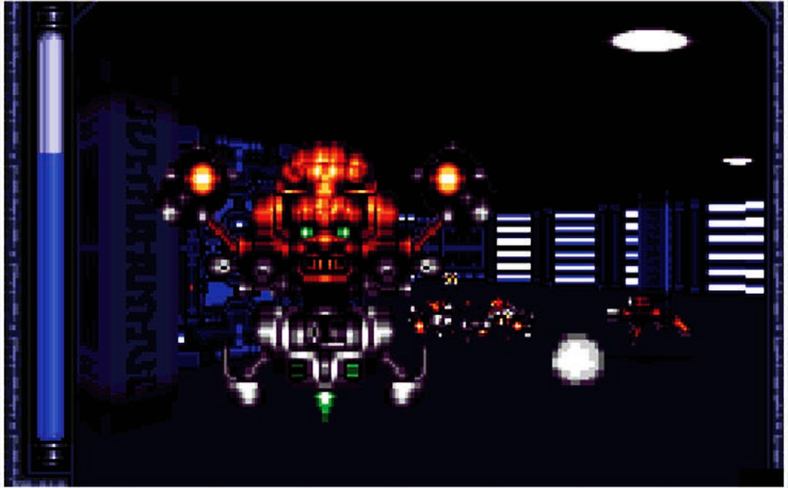


Bloodshot -

As an Elite Trooper of the Earth Federation Starfleet Command, your brain has been implanted with the “Battle Frenzy” chip, which gives you “super strength, lightning reflexes, and an insatiable desire to kill.” The briefing in the instruction manual goes on to describe this condition as “Bloodshot.” Your mission, as with many games of this type, is to indiscriminately waste legions of alien robots on an alien space ship. There is a nice opening sequence of quick cuts giving the background to the game’s story and a textual outline of your mission.

The controls are, for the most part, smooth and responsive. You might occasionally get that glued-to-the-spot syndrome when near a wall or other obstacle, but it’s rare, making it easy to shoot robots or run back to the safe point. You only use three buttons, which is good in the simplistic sense, but I feel a better use for the other three would be for weapon selection. There were precious few FPS games released for the Mega-CD, which is a shame, as the black box was well known for its prowess with shooters and most systems of today can boast some sort of flagship FPS. Maybe the Mega-CD wasn’t best suited to this type of genre, but I think it’s fair to say that Bloodshot disproves that.


acclaim entertainment, inc presents
a domark software game
bloodshot
created by jim blackler
art by joe groombridge sound by mike ash
copyright 1994 domark software, ltd.
all rights reserved.
licensed by sega enterprises, ltd.



Title:
Bloodshot a.k.a. (Blood Frenzy)

Genre:
Third Person Action Sci-Fi Shooter

Developer:
Domark Software Ltd.

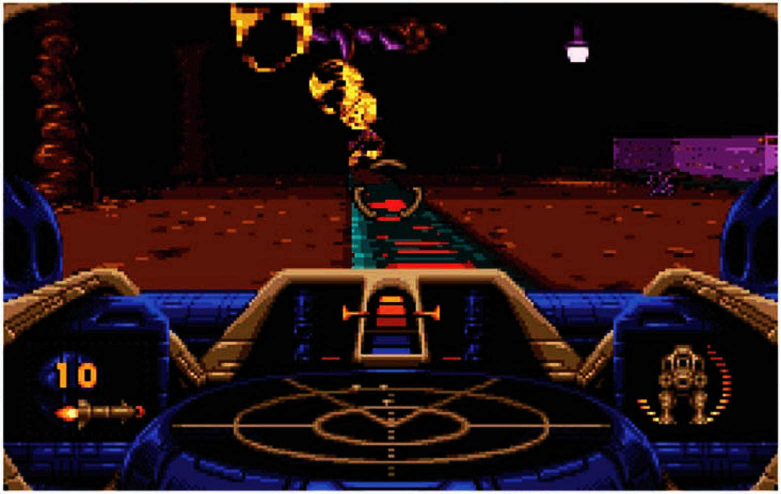
Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
The Kremlin

COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
BATTLECORPS
T-115045-50
CORE DESIGN LIMITED
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD SYSTEM.

G1

09



Battlecorps -

The year is 2085 and all is not well on the mining planet Mandelbrot's World. The artificial intelligence controlling operations on the planet, MOSES, has been infected with a virus causing machines to turn against humans and making the entire planet a veritable fortress in the process. It's your job, as a veteran of the Battlecorps, to go planet-side and do a spot of IT support. The Corps has equipped you with something a little more "proactive" than a screwdriver set. You'll get to pilot one of the Corps state-of-the-art Armadillo-class Bipedal Attack Machines (BAM), a huge battle-mech armed to the teeth with all sorts of weaponry.

Battlecorps is a 3D first-person shooter played over 13 relatively short levels. The aim of the game is to navigate each of the levels, completing objectives along the way, until you reach the final encounter with MOSES. But don't expect this to be a walk in the park as Battlecorps packs quite a challenge. Battlecorps is a polished and nuanced game. It has all the hallmarks of a game that should have had a few sequels, but for whatever reason that never happened. I have played a number of mech-based games since Battlecorps and none of them have so convincingly made me believe I was in control of a giant mech than this. You need to hop into the pilot seat as soon as possible. A classic Mega-CD title. ■

BATTLECORPS
START GAME
OPTIONS

Title:
Battlecorps

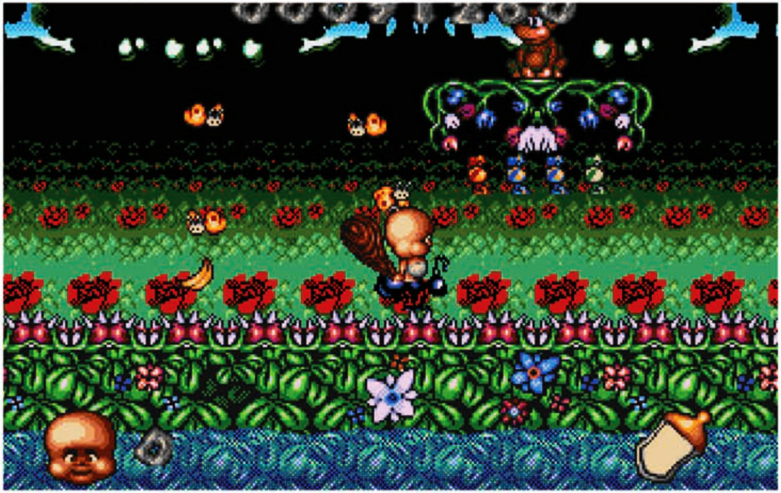
Genre:
3D Action Futuristic Tank Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Core Design

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Core Design

COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
CHUCK ROCK II
SON OF CHUCK
CORE DESIGN LIMITED
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM
670-4502-50
T-115025-50



Chuck Rock 2 Son of Chuck -

Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck takes place sometime after the end of the first one. Chuck Sr. opens the first auto manufacturer and gets rich but trouble is in the midst. The Evil Brick Jagger isn't as good as Chuck at manufacturing automobiles so he kidnaps Chuck and holds him for ransom and takes over his plant. Chuck Jr. sets out with his trusty club to rescue his father because after all, "he is a chip off the old block!" The game plays a bit different than the first one. Chuck Jr., who seems to be a bit more intelligent than his father even at a young age, attacks with a club instead of simply bumping enemies with his beer gut like his dumb father did, making it much harder to attack enemies in the first game. Junior can balance on his club to avoid enemies by pressing A.

He can also bat rocks around to create platforms to reach high up areas. Junior can also ride on a variety of animal friends now too, all of which help in different ways. The Mega-CD's added extras are enough of a boost to make this game a lot of fun to play. If you own the cartridge already, then I wouldn't go out of your way to buy this one. However, if you are thinking about buying this game and have a Mega-CD, then get this version first because the intro is top notch. ■

Son
OF
CHUCK

Title:
Chuck Rock 2: Son of Chuck

Genre:
Arcade Action Platform Adventure Title

Developer:
Core Design Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Core Design Ltd.

VOIR CARTE DE DUNE

Fremen

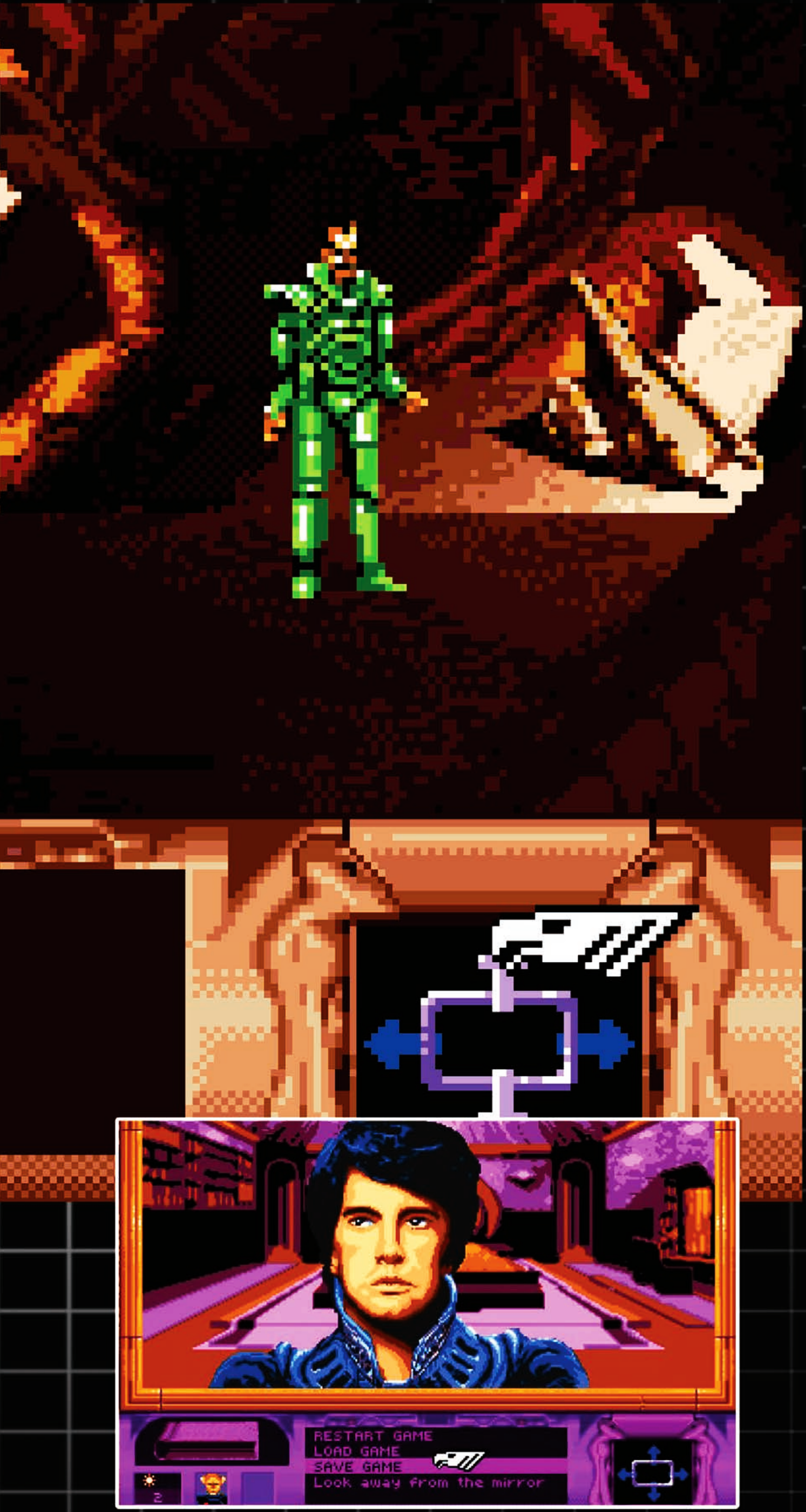
Gurney HALLECK

COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
Virgin
DUNE
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA-CD™ SYSTEM

SEE DUNE MAP

TAKE AN ORNITHOPTER

Mixer Panel



Dune -

The name Dune evokes among all science fiction enthusiasts the excellent work of Frank Herbert, which was successively adapted to both cinema and television. The world of video games has not escaped it for our gaming pleasure. Arriving on the Sega Mega-CD. Dune has a mix of gameplay styles: adventure, point & click, management and strategy. This title has lots of facets and each is more interesting than the last. You play as Paul Atreides and you have the heavy load of managing Arrakis, in particular through its main resource, its atypical inhabitants the Fremen, and of course its enemies. It all starts nicely with a cutscene direct from David Lynch's film, where the charming princess Iluhan presents this enchanting planet to you.

Dune remains a monument of video games. It makes good use of the technology, has a well-crafted scenario and very well-designed gameplay making it a title that is always very pleasant to discover or rediscover. We quickly forget the faults associated with games of this time: Dune offers an amazing experience and is a beautifully designed piece of software for your Mega-CD. If you have never experienced Dune, then you owe it to yourself to dive in and mine the spice. Even if this isn't your cup of tea, I guarantee you will be hooked from beginning to end. ■

Title:
The Terminator

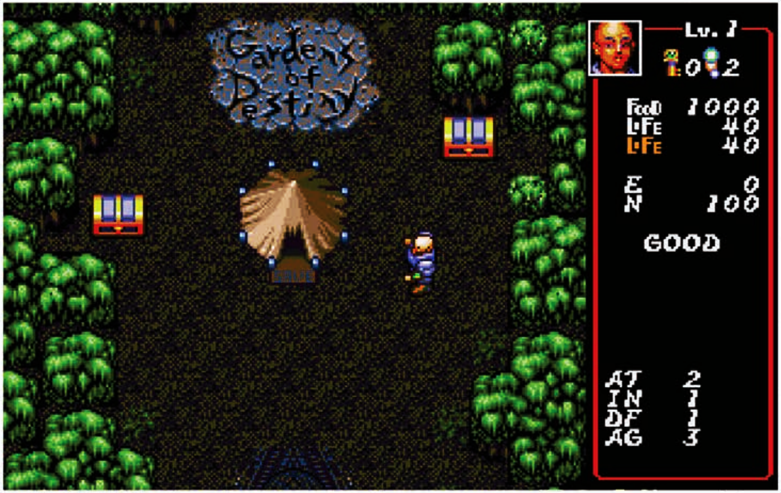
Genre:
Movie Adventure, Strategy & Tactics Title

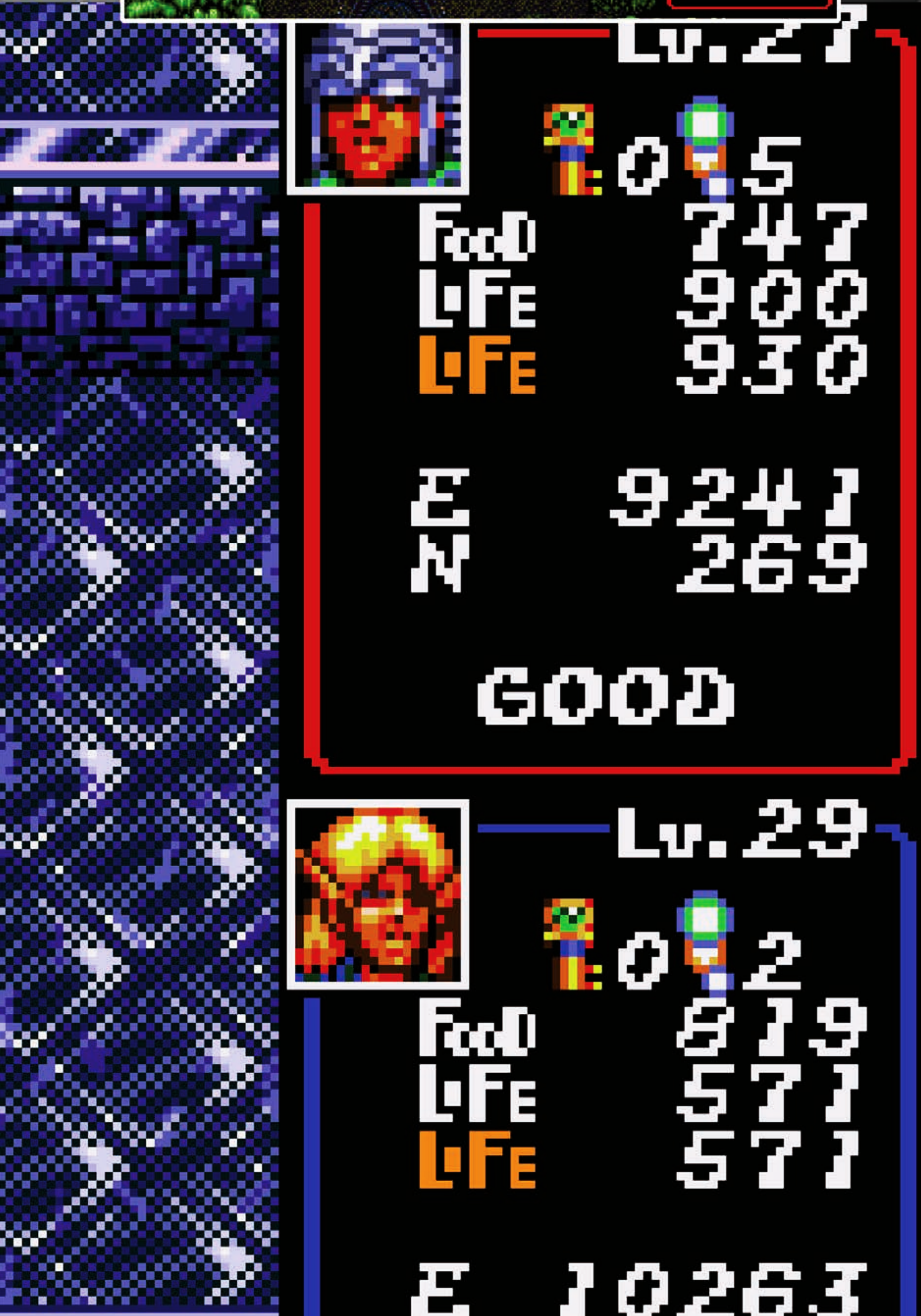
Developer:
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Virgin Games, Inc.

HUDSON GROUP
HUDSON SOFT
MEGA-CD
SEGA MEGA-CD
Dungeon Explorer
Dungeon Explorer™
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM

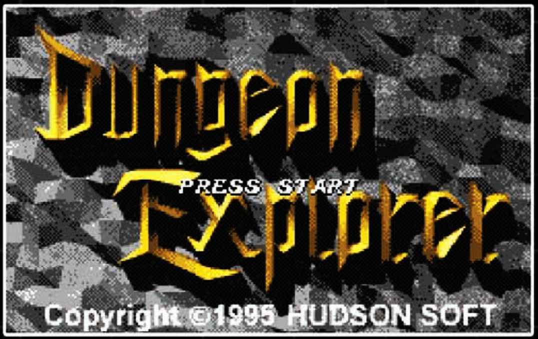

Garden of Destiny
Lv. 1
0 2
Food 1000
Life 40
Life 40
E 0
N 100
GOOD
AT 2
IN 1
DF 1
AG 3


Lv.27
0 5
Food 747
Life 900
Life 930
E 9241
N 269
GOOD
Lv.29
0 2
Food 819
Life 571
Life 571
E 10263

Dungeon Explorer -

Dungeon Explorer is a multiplayer Action/RPG where up to 4 players can play at the same time. The Mega-CD version differs from the TurboGrafx-16 original in look and gameplay but the central theme (different classes, dungeons to go through) are intact, It was developed by Westone, the same company behind Sega's Wonder Boy games, and, like Hudson's other Mega-CD release, Lords of Thunder, was only released in North America and Europe. There are six classes in this version: Knight, Ninja, Beast, Elf, Monk and Wizard. Multiplayer is also limited to four players. After choosing your character, you're sent to a small screen called Freedom Hill, which essentially acts as the hub for each of the six main dungeons. You can theoretically tackle them in an order during your quest.

Dungeon Explorer can take a while to complete, and since you only have a single life, it can be frustrating to restart an entire dungeon because you made a single incorrect move. Your saving grace is in knowing that the password system has been dumped in favour of a save game system. The Mega-CD version is a different take on the mainline series, and while it's actually pretty great in multiplayer it isn't the easiest of titles to master but one worth experiencing if you love your RPG's. ■


Dungeon Explorer
PRESS START
Copyright ©1995 HUDSON SOFT

Title:
Dungeon Explorer

Genre:
RPG Adventure Title

Developer:
Westone Bit Entertainment

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Hudson Soft Company, Ltd.

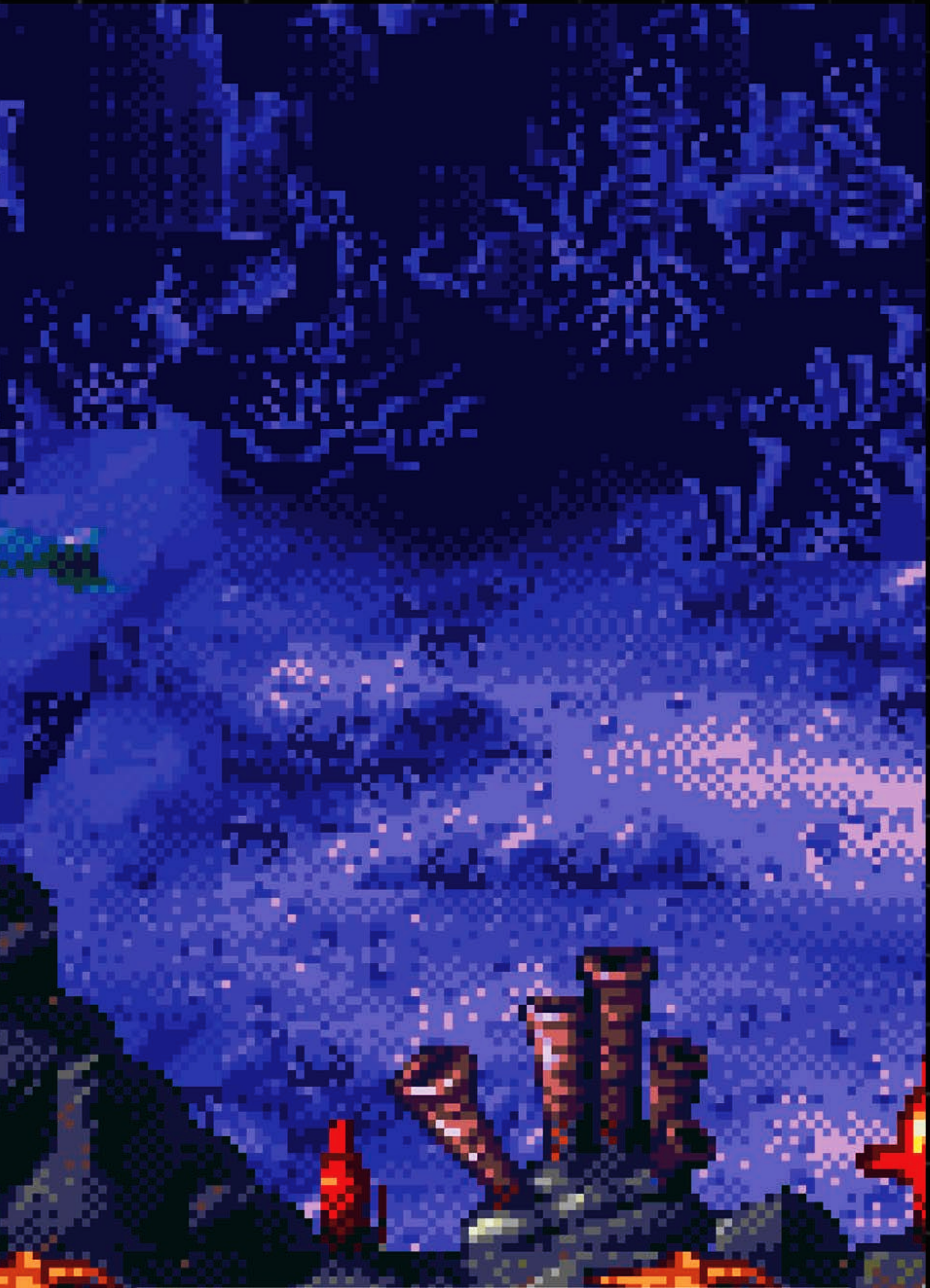
MEGA-CD
SEGA MEGA-CD
ECCO - The Tides of Time
ECCO
THE TIDES OF TIME
670-5963-50
4441-50
COMPACT disc
SEGA

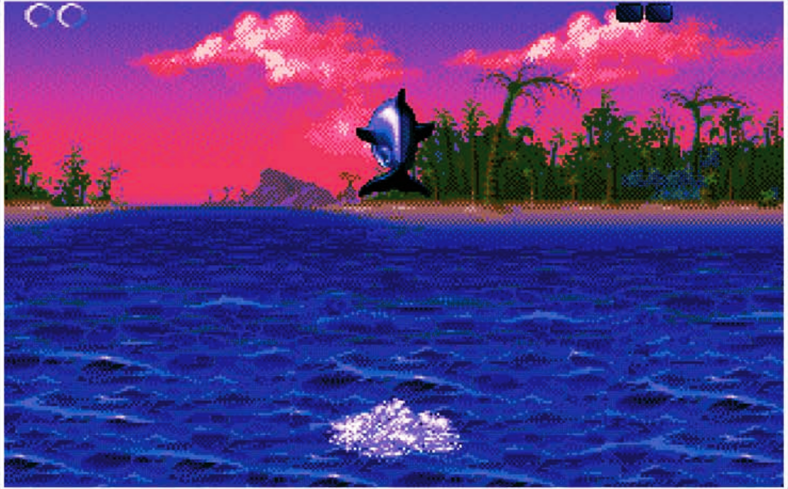
Ecco : Tides of Time -

The star-speckled dolphin hero Ecco returns to save the ocean world once again in Ecco: The Tides of Time. A sequel to Ecco the Dolphin, Ecco's peaceful pod life is disturbed when he discovers that the Vortex Queen survived and the timeline has been split in two. He must once again travel through time to regain his powers and repair the fracture in time. Like the original, Ecco can use his sonar to communicate with other ocean creatures and activate glyphs, enemies are dispatched by ramming into them with his nose and he must surface at intervals for air. But new power-ups are introduced such as the Pulsar and Metasphere, the latter allowing Ecco to transform into different animals such as a seagull or jellyfish.

Tides of Time also showcases the Sega CD's visual prowess with smooth and improved graphics and impressive FMV sequences shown between levels and through 'History Glyphs' unique to the Sega CD version. The music too is beautiful: a blend of mystical ambience and eighties-style synthesisers reflecting the ever-changing sea. A fine example of a sequel surpassing the original, Ecco: The Tides of Time takes the best qualities of its predecessor and polishes them to a shine, resulting in a thoroughly enchanting oceanic adventure. ■

ECCO TM
the TIDES of TIME
TM&©1994 SEGA
DEVELOPED BY NOVOTRADE





Title:
Ecco: Tides of Time

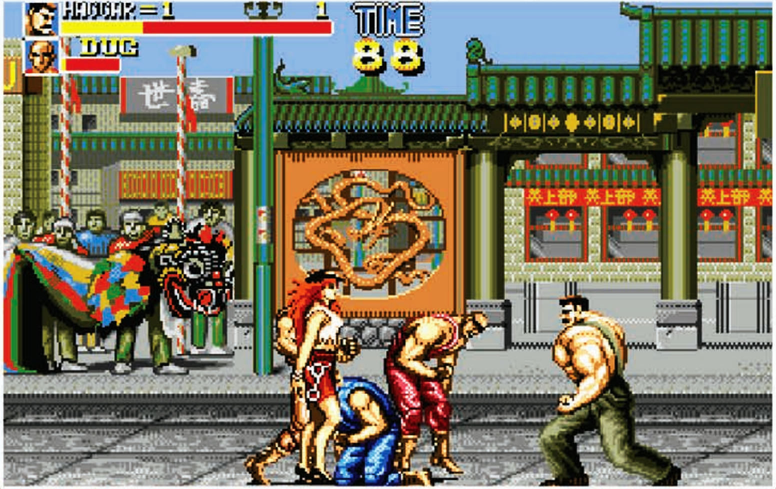
Genre:
Dolphin Ambient Simulator Adventure Title

Developer:
Novotrade Software Kft.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.

COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
Final Fight CD
FINAL FIGHT CD
SEGA
670-3097-50


HAGGAR = 1
1
TIME
88
DUG

Final Fight CD -

This was not the first time that a Final Fight game had appeared on a home console but the Mega CD / Sega CD version was still a welcome edition. Character designs and a whole level having previously been removed from other versions returned with alterations. The premise of the game focused around three lead characters waging war in the fictional Metro City overrun by a gang known as the Mad Gears. Haggar had an unusual background of being the mayor (with pro-wrestling experience) forced to clean up his own streets after the kidnapping of his daughter.

This version of the game is fondly remembered for having the capacity to include voice acting in the introduction and ending animations. There was also a new bonus time attack round included to make it stand out from the other ports and the extraordinary CD quality soundtrack. However, its Capcom style of bold colours, clean animation and less crowded screen made it far more accessible experience for new players to the genre. Fans of the Street Fighter series may also recognise our leads from their humble beginnings here. ■

Final Fight CD
PRESS START
TM

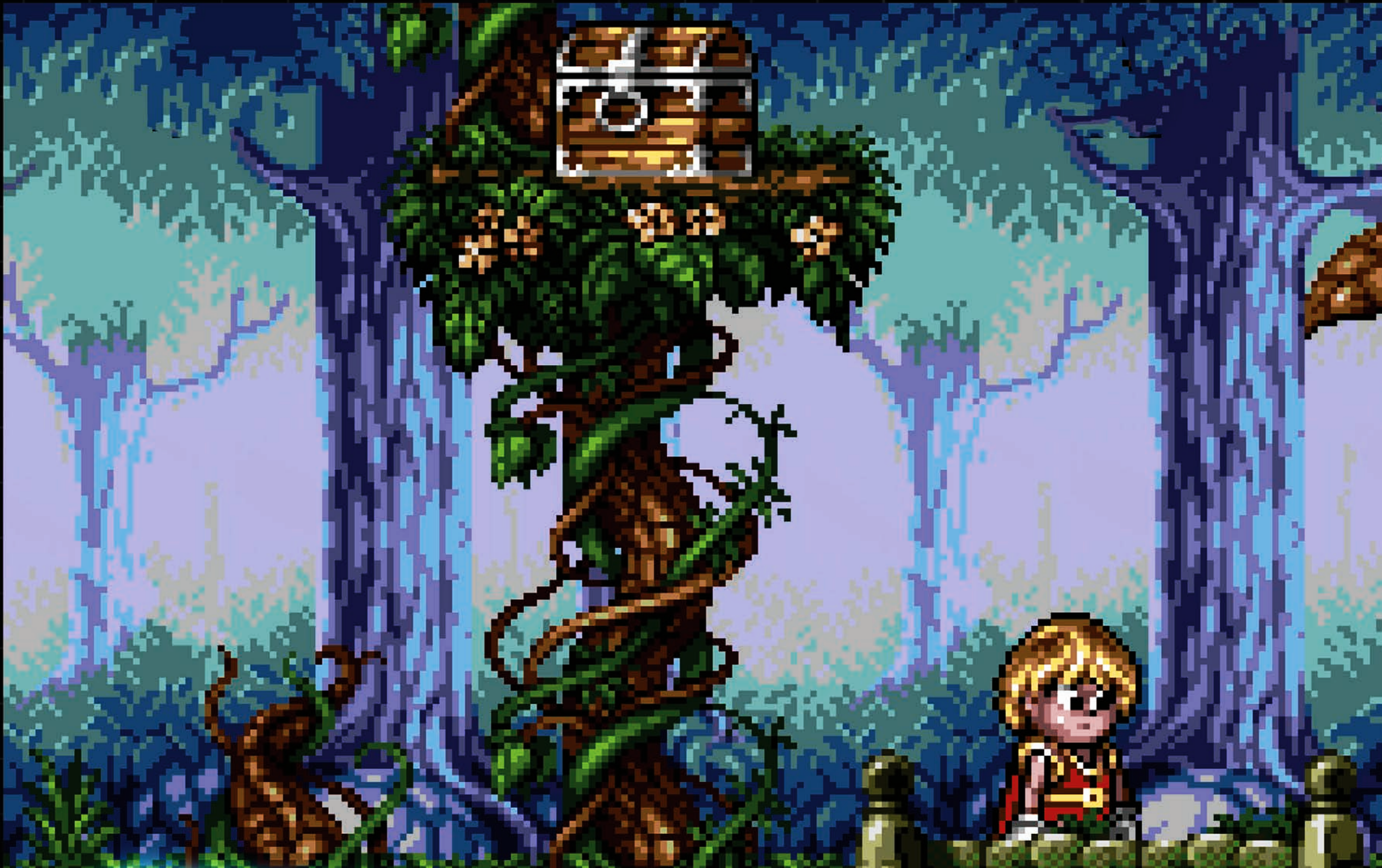
Title:
Final Fight CD

Genre:
Arcade Side Scrolling Beat'em Up

Developer:
Capcom

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Capcom



Flink
MEGA-CD
SEGA MEGA-CD
FLINK
SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM

×3

Flink -

Released in 1994 by Psygnosis (SCE Studio Liverpool), Flink was brought to us by the same team that developed the cult hit platformers Wiz 'n' Liz and Lionheart and the influence shows. While the Mega-CD version was released worldwide, it certainly isn't the easiest game to find. The game introduces you to the vibrant world of Imagica, where apparently four wizards have been kidnapped and have been trapped inside crystals strewn across the land. You are a young understudy who has spent most of his life exclusively poring through magic books and not seeing much of the world. Flink has a bit of a wide-eyed charm to him. The premise is simple enough: release your masters from the crystals and the door to Wainwright's lair opens for a final showdown with evil.

If you're a gamer who can appreciate every colour of the rainbow and thought put into Flink this is a magnificent title deserving of a lot more praise and recognition than it got back when it was released. An innovative magic system, some of the best graphics of any 16-bit game and a mix of re-playability and challenge that will keep you coming back for more, this is one of the Mega-CD's premium titles. ■

The MisAdventures of Flink
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. © 1994 PSYGNOSIS, LTD.

Title:
The Misadventures of Flink

Genre:
A Visual Rich Action Adventure Title

Developer:
Psygnosis

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega

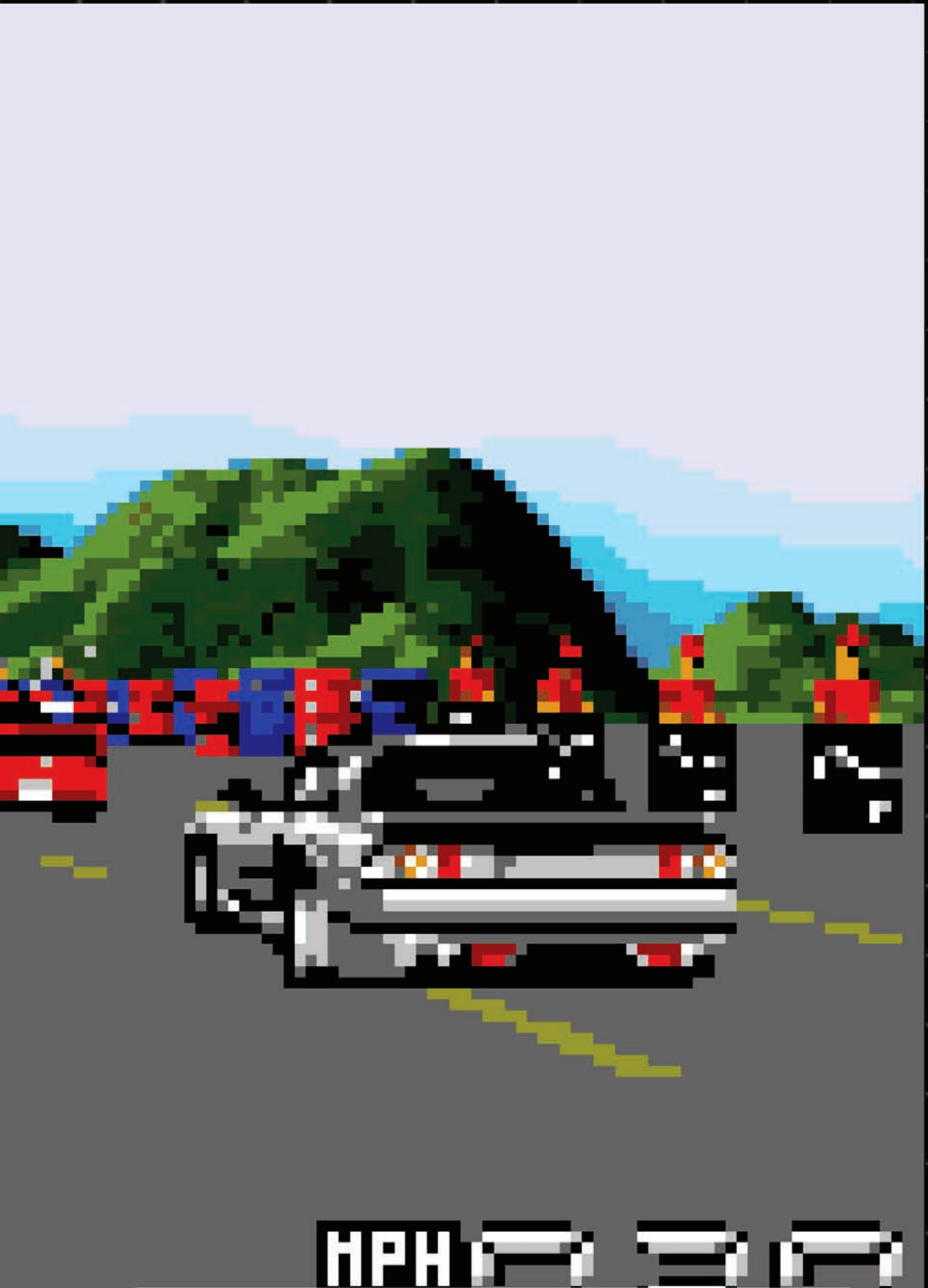
COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
MEGA-CD
JAGUAR XJ220
JAGUAR
XJ220
CORE
670-3023-50

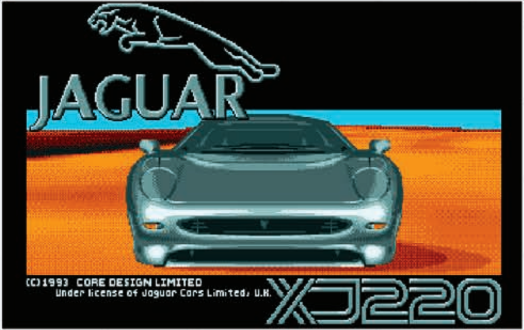
MPH
MPH 132

Jaguar XJ220 -

When it was released, the Jaguar XJ220 was the fastest and most expensive production car in the world, making it the perfect vehicle for a racing game. Core Design's game was well-suited to such an exceptional car. It is an arcade-style game that possesses all the expected modes: Grand Prix, World Tour, and Free Practice, as well as a two-player option. The aim is to amass the most points to win the championship. One of the best features is the Track Editor, allowing players to create, and then race on, tracks they have designed. By modern standards this is incredibly clunky, but at the time was a very novel feature and is still a lot of fun.

Between races the player has to spend their winnings fixing the car (as well as paying to go to the next choice of country in World Tour) and it is here we see one of the lovely touches of the game: the jaguar from the car's logo walking back and forth as you scroll through the various engineering options. Another great feature is the ability to pick one of the game's music tracks from a car stereo graphic before each race. A great Mega-CD racer. ■




JAGUAR
(C)1993 CORE DESIGN LIMITED
Under license of Jaguar Cars Limited, U.K.
XJ220

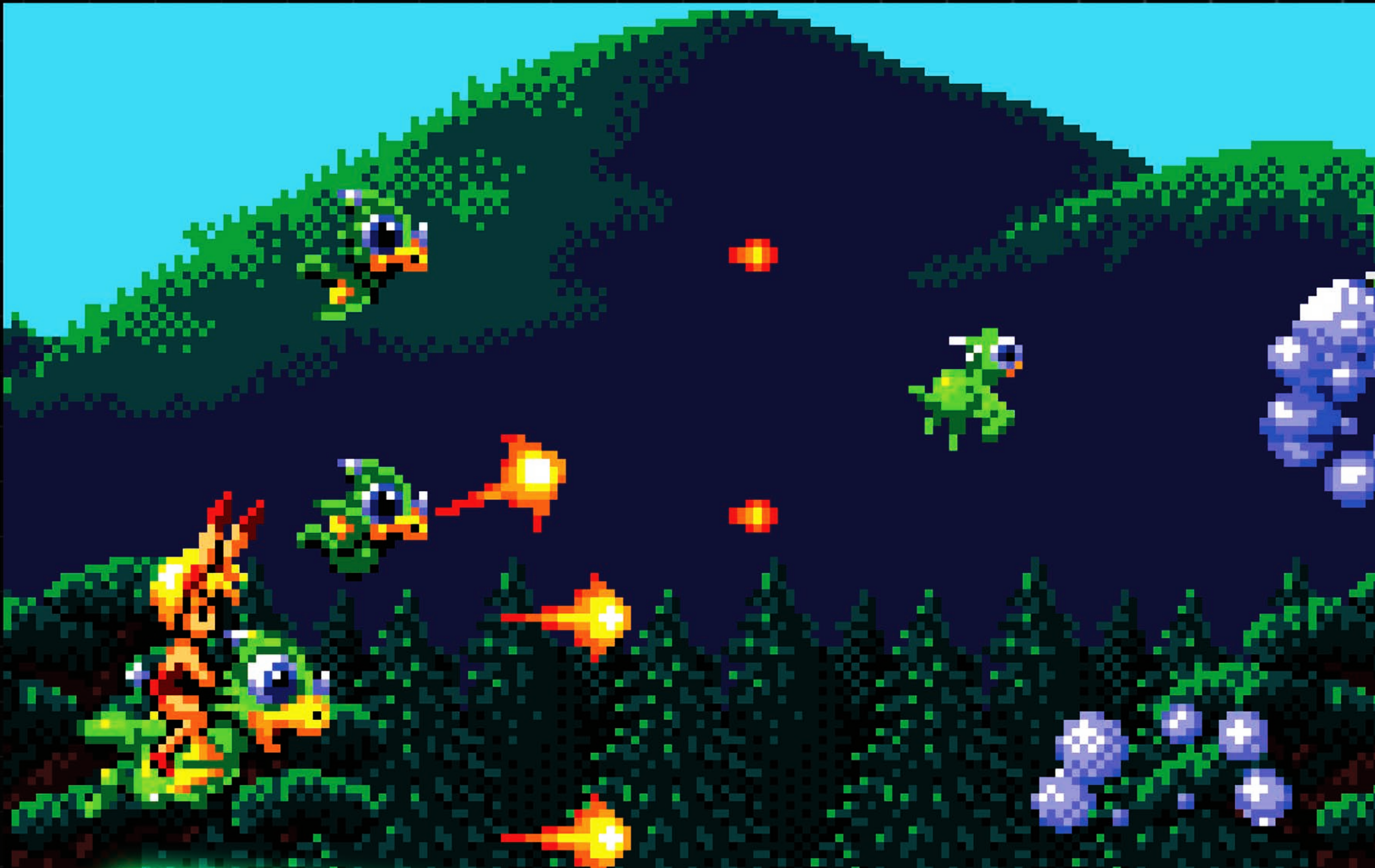
Title:
Jaguar XJ220

Genre:
Cross Country Arcade Driving Title

Developer:
Core Design Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
JVC Musical Industries, Inc.



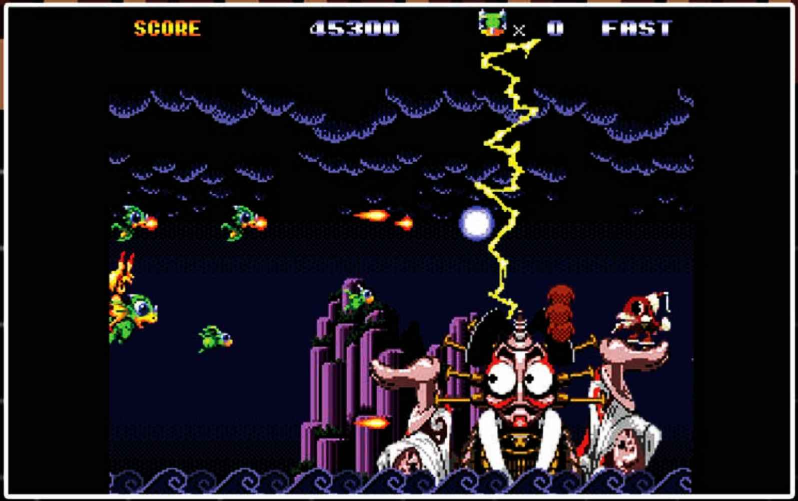
MEGA-CD
KEIO FLYING SQUADRON
JVC
keio flying squadron
慶応遊撃隊
SEGA
COMPACT disc
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM

Keio Flying Squadron -

Keio Flying Squadron (KFS) also known as Keio Yuugekitai is a wacky shooter that was released for the Mega-CD/Sega CD in 1995 published by JVC. It was one of the last games to be released for the dying platform and is somewhat rare, particularly in PAL format, fetching very high prices. Considering the conditions of the time with how the Mega-CD was performing, it was odd that such a game even got a translation for the West. It is 17th century feudal Japan, in Edo the capital city. Rami, by all outward appearances is a typical 20-year-old Japanese girl but has been the keeper to the Secret Treasure. Rami is actually the descendant of aliens who came to Earth in ancient times. The Secret Treasure is locked by a key and Rami does not know the secret inside.

Overall, the game is a pretty good horizontal shooter of Japanese anime style. You play as both Rami, a scantily clad bunny girl, and Spot, her dragon companion of 11 years of age. You essentially shoot down anything that appears on the screen. Graphics are pretty good but it is somewhat obvious they suffer from the limitations of the hardware specifically the number of available colours. The sound capabilities of the system are put to good use. It is now generally regarded as one of the better games on the system scoring respectably high review scores and potentially had been a glimpse into what improved games were heading to the system had it survived another year. This game was not the typical FMV title. ■

慶応遊撃隊
KEIO FLYING SQUADRON
PRESS START BUTTON
©1993,94 VICTOR ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd.



Title:
Keio Flying Squadron

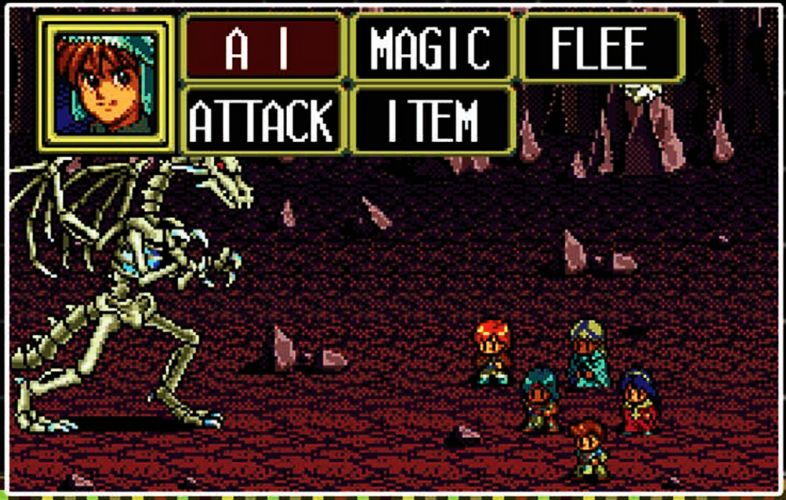
Genre:
Awesome Side Scrolling Shoot'em up

Developer:
Victor Entertainment Inc.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
JVC Musical Industries, Inc.

メガ・CD専用
MEGA CD
LUNAR
THE SILVER STAR
ルナ ザ・シルバースター
GAME ARTS
BACK UP RAM


A I
MAGIC
FLEE
ATTACK
ITEM

Lunar The Silver Star

Released for the Sega CD in 1992, Lunar: The Silver Star was Game Arts' first RPG title (and its best) and was one of the most successful RPGs for the system, despite sparse sales of the Sega CD. Lunar starts off on a traditional note. In this medieval fantasy world you play as a boy named Alex who lives in the small town of Burg. Unhappy with his simple life he dreams of having grand adventures like his hero Dyne who harnessed the power of the Dragonmaster years ago to save the world. He also just so happens to be from the same village. The adventure starts as Alex is tempted into his first adventure by his best friend Ramus.

In terms of graphics Lunar looks very much like a Sega Genesis game. The developers didn't take advantage of the capabilities of the add-on hardware on a large scale here, but that's not a problem. Everything looks fine by 16-bit standards, but there isn't a lot of colour depth and some character sprites don't match their appearance in the anime sequences. Speaking of which these are extremely basic, featuring minimal animation, but are still charming. The music is amazing. All tracks are charming and memorable and are all red book as per the CD storage format. The voice overs are great by early video game standards, and everything is clear and easy to understand. Worthy of your collection. ■

LUNAR™

THE SILVER STAR

PRESS START BUTTON

©1993 WORKING DESIGNS
©1992 GAME ARTS/STUDIO ALEX
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES,LTD.

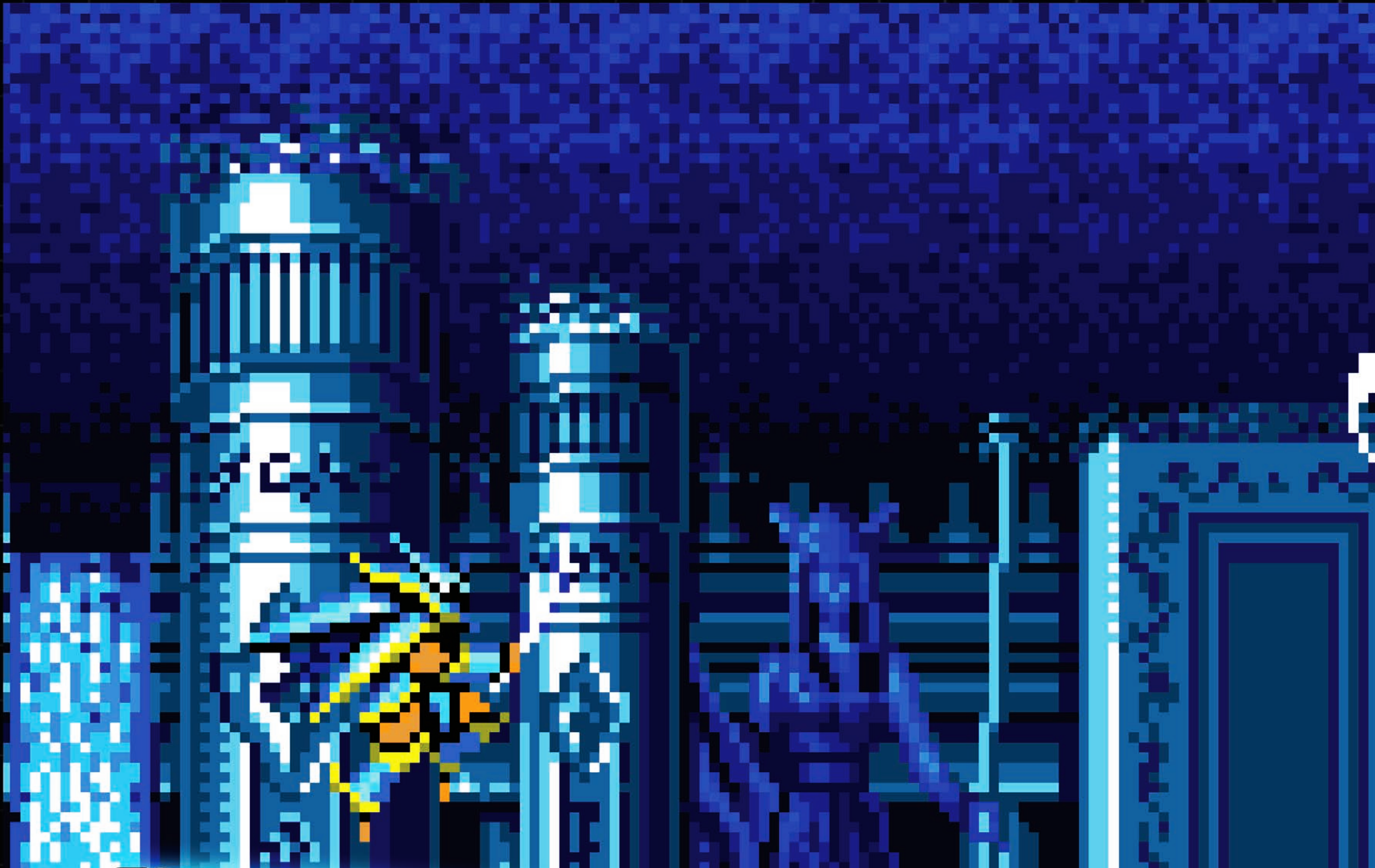
Title:
Lunar: The Sliver Star

Genre:
Classic RPG Adventure

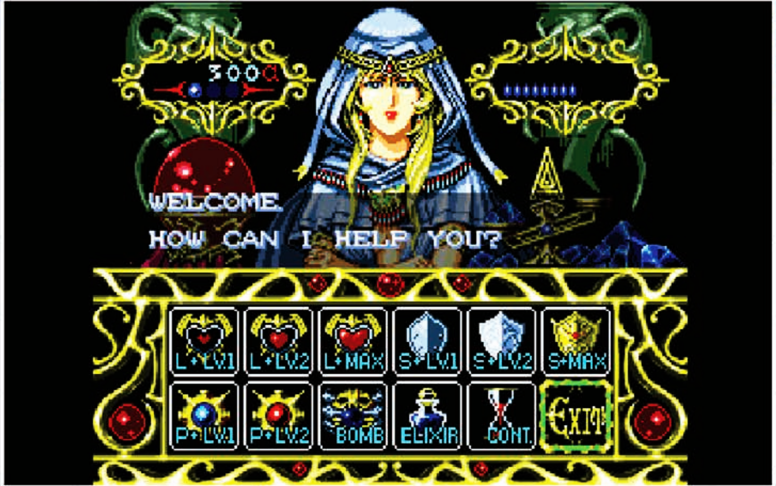
Developer:
Game Arts Co., Ltd., Studio Alex, Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Working Designs



HUDSON GROUP
HUDSON SOFT
SEGA
MEGA-CD
LORDS OF THUNDER
LORDS OF THUNDER
™
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM


WELCOME.
HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
3000
L+LV1
L+LV2
L+MAX
S+LV1
S+LV2
S+MAX
P+LV1
P+LV2
BOMB
ELIXIR
CONT.
EXIT

Lords of Thunder -

Lords of Thunder is a shoot 'em up by Hudson Soft and Red Company, released for the TurboDuo in 1993. It was ported to the Mega-CD in 1995. It is the unofficial follow-up to Gate of Thunder and features a heavy metal soundtrack. The game is centred around the world Mistral's confrontation with the re-awakened evil god Deoric and his dark generals who have torn the world asunder. With the armour of his ancestor Drac, the legendary knight Duran sets off to defeat Deoric's army in 7 different stages, the first six of which can be selected in a manner similar to Thunder Force III. Once the stage is selected, the player selects one of four armours (based on the four classical elements) to use, affecting his shots and bombs.

Lords of Thunder on the Mega-CD received a mixture of opinions from critics. Electronic Gaming Monthly's four reviewers described it as dramatically inferior to the TurboDuo version. The Mega-CD version is nonetheless "a fairly close port" and helped fill a niche genre on a system with very few traditional shooters. Lords of Thunder may not set the world on fire but I felt it was worthy enough to be included in the Mega Collection book and if you get a chance to judge this title on its own merits, you might just be as surprised as I was when I played for the first time.

LORDS OF THUNDER
START
CONFIGURATION
©1995 HUDSON SOFT

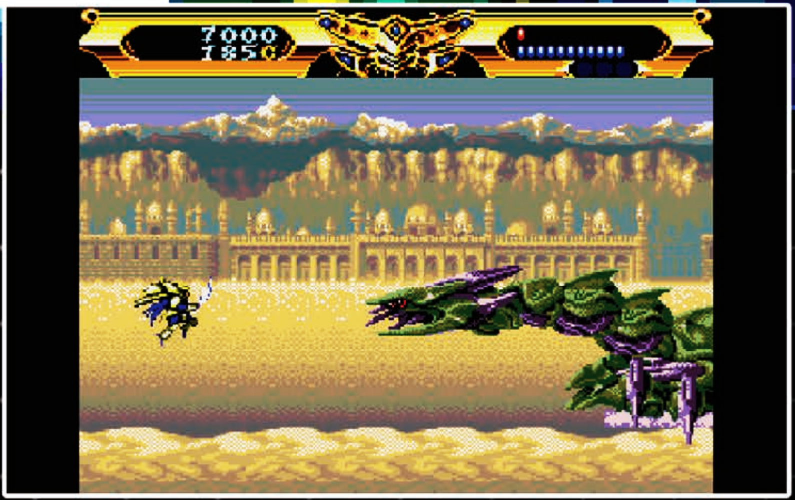
Title:
Lords of Thunder

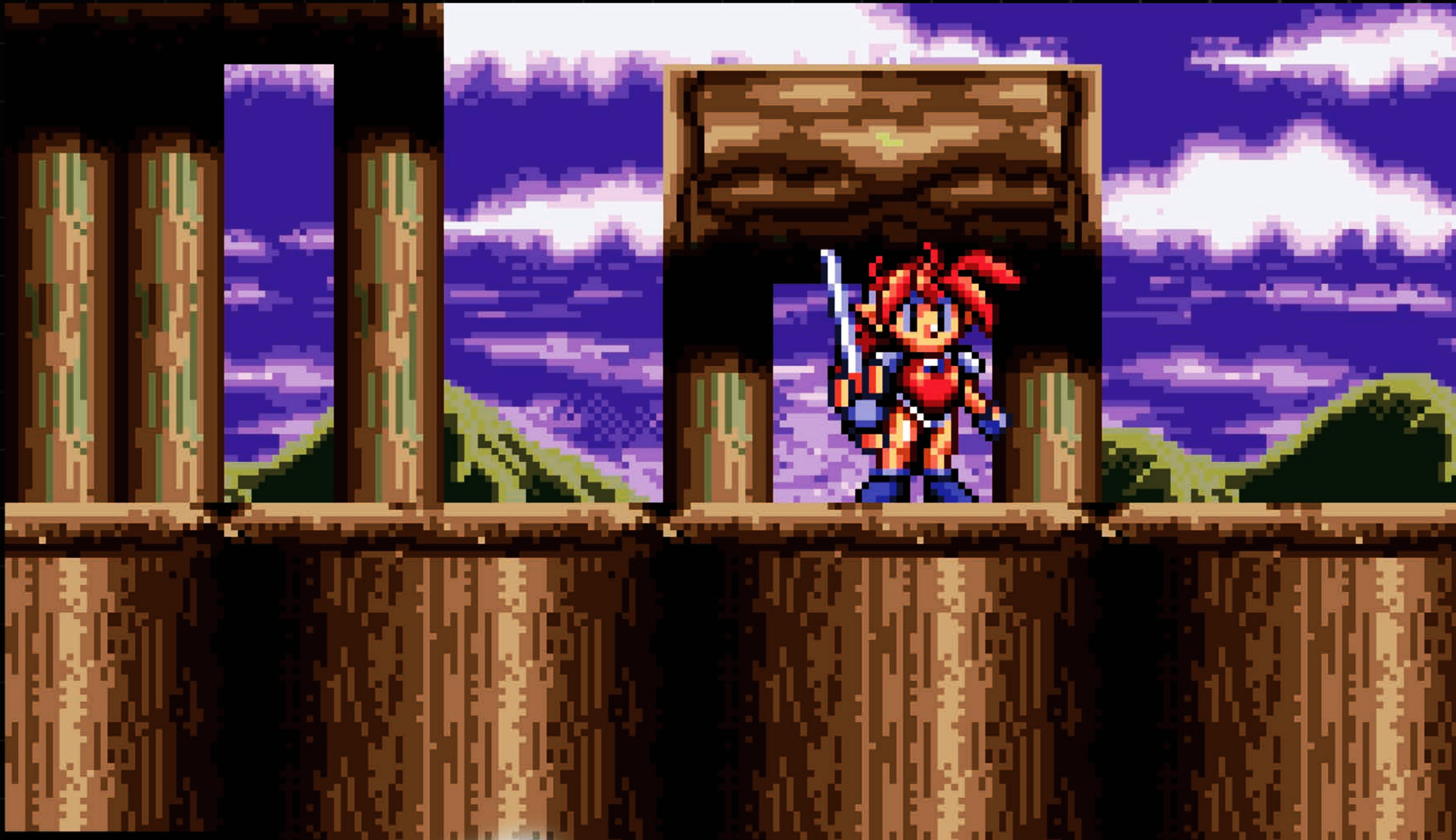
Genre:
Horizontal Scrolling Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Hudson Soft

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Virgin Interactive




ARMS
KEY
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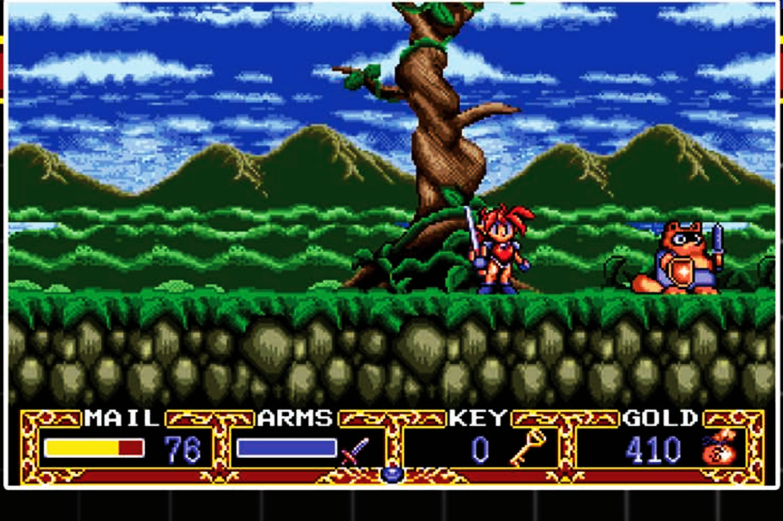
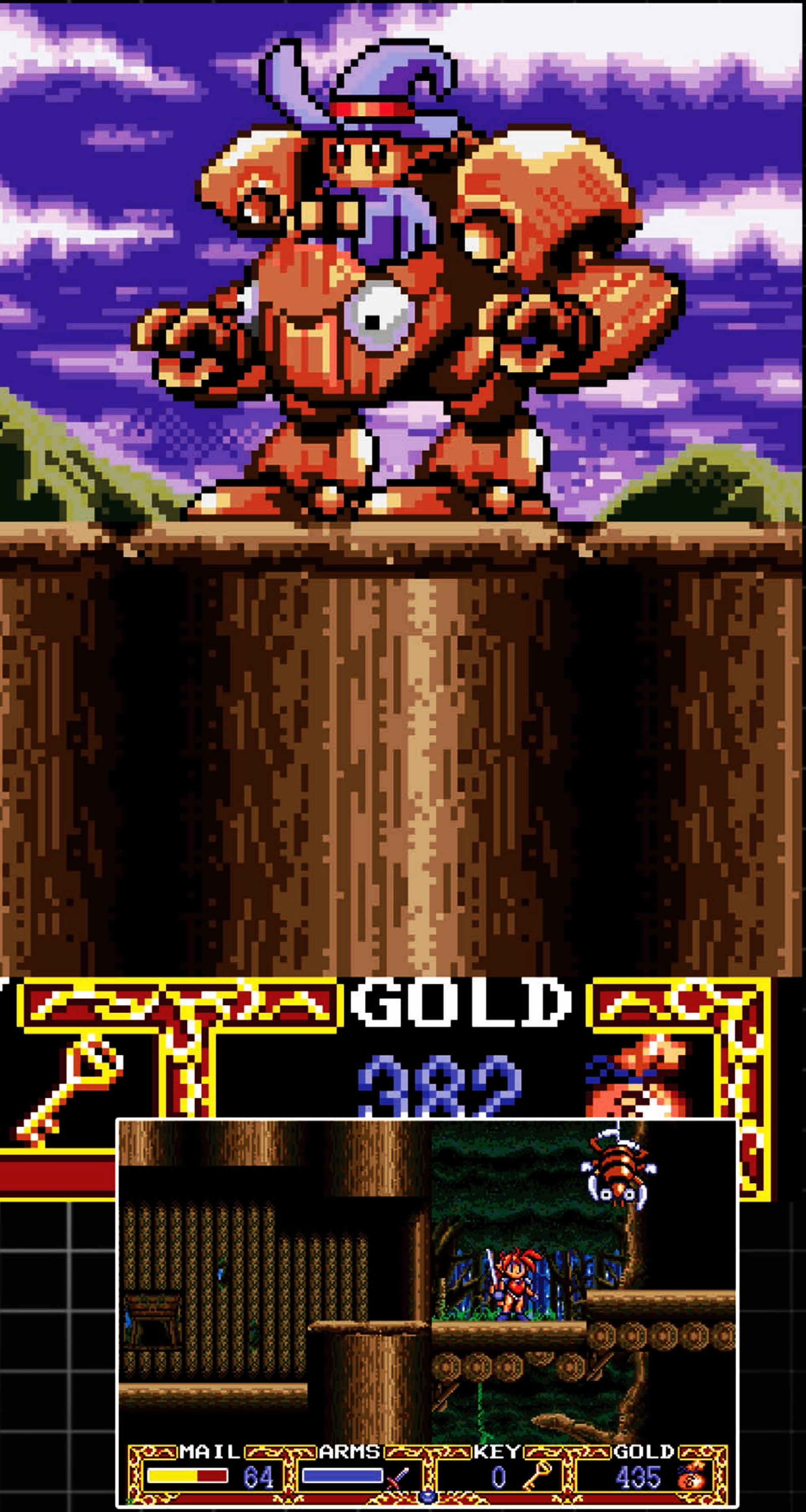
メガ・CD専用
MEGA CD
取扱説明書
ぽっぷるメイル
MEGA-CD
SEGA

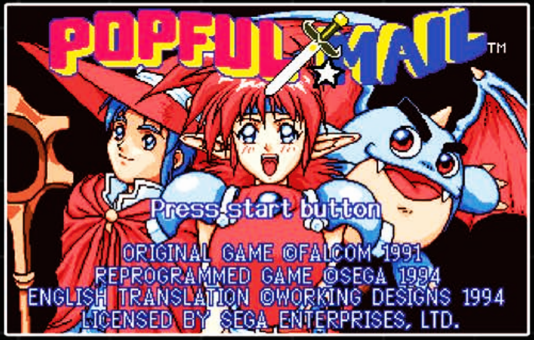

MAIL
76
ARMS
KEY
0
GOLD
410



Popful Mail -

Popful Mail: Magical Fantasy Adventure is a 2D action RPG platformer created by Nihon Falcom and was originally made for the NEC PC-8801 in 1991 and PC-9801 in 1992. The game was later ported to various consoles including the PC Engine CD, Super Famicom and Sega CD in 1994. Working Designs localized and published the Sega CD game in North America in 1995 and is the only port of the game with official English localization. The game features a colourful cast of lively characters and their over the top personalities set in a fantasy story filled with elves, dwarfs, magicians and other fantasy characterizations.

The game features some quirky characters along the way with companions to play as, and others who will help you or get in your way and cause problems. All of this is done with their own unique personalities. Each version of the game has some noticeable differences, but the story remains the same as well as the gameplay: all of them are a 2D side scrolling platformer game with RPG content or simply “Action/RPG”. Popful Mail is a rare treat for the Mega-CD, and you really should see it if you can. I think it’s a great game collaboration and better that more people outside Japan got to play it than never being able to at all. An excellent title to own in your Mega-CD collection. ■



Press start button

ORIGINAL GAME ©FALCOM 1991
REPROGRAMMED GAME ©SEGA 1994
ENGLISH TRANSLATION ©WORKING DESIGNS 1994
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.

Title:
Popful Mail

Genre:
Action Adventure Platform Title

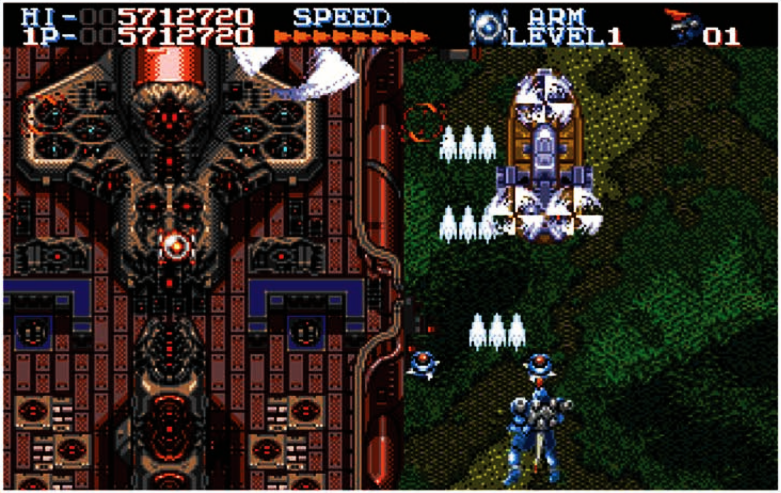
Developer:
Working Designs

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega of Japan

SEGA
MEGA-CD
MEGA-CD
ROBO ALESTE
ROBO ALESTE
COMPACT disc
SEGA

HI-002284080
1P-002284080
SPEED
ARM
LEVEL3
03



Robo Aleste -

Robo Aleste is so different in the most fantastic way imaginable. Not only does it use the Mega-CD's awesome untapped technology to give the player cinematic visuals with voice acting, but it also tells a story of epic proportion and so farfetched out there that we could only wish more developers had both the creativity and ability to put in such efforts For a video game. Set in feudal Japan, a land where warlords raised armies to fight other warlords in an attempt to reign supreme, men such as Oda Nobunaga, a renowned leader from the 1500s, would mass-produce robot ninjas to serve as their shock troops, filling the air with lasers and unlimited rapid-fire ninja stars as they obliterated rival robot armies. Unfortunately for Kage, one of Nobunaga's top robot-fliers, the complete forces of Japan's other warlords, backed by a powerful leader from another dimension, all banded together to obliterate the rest of Oda's army.

Now, you must take control of Kage on a mission of vengeance, justice and blowing up really big mechs. Robo Aleste differs from the pack in that it is one that should be experienced instead of read about, as words simply do not do it justice. If I were to attempt to single out a couple of flaws, I guess I could mention how difficult the bosses are later on in the game, or how it was a little bit unsatisfactory to have the final boss fight be followed by a pretty big plot twist. But with all of that aside this is an incredible shooter. ■

ROBO
ALESTE
TM
PRESS START BUTTON
©1993 SEGA/COMPILE

Title:
Robo Aleste

Genre:
Vertical Scrolling Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Compile

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Sega

SCORE
0032010
OPT.
00.5

SEGA
MEGA-CD
COMPACT disc
MEGA-CD
SILPHEED
SEGA
SILPHEED
GAME ARTS
670-4257-50

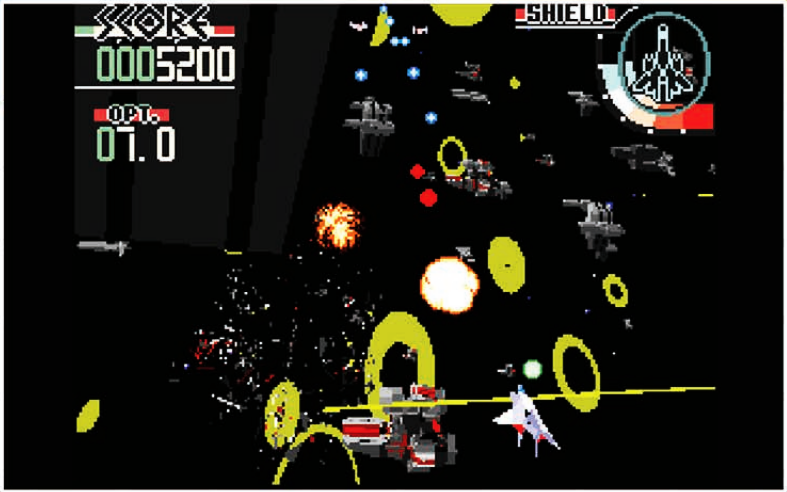
SCORE
0015400
SHIELD

Silpheed -

I'm pretty new to Mega CD/Sega CD ownership having only bought one about five years ago, but a game I was desperate to play (even in the '90s when I'd read about the CD games) was Silpheed. The game received phenomenal scores in gaming magazines and it's easy to see why. Silpheed is about as simple as a shoot 'em up gets. One button to shoot, D-Pad to move around. That's it. And the plot is simple: save the Earth from some bad guy before you get blasted into smithereens.

So why is it so good? The Mega CD/Sega CD version places the action against a pre-rendered, animated background. The result is stunning. Your eyes want to focus on the mini enemy polygons and power ups but they're drawn to the periphery. None of it has anything to do with your health gauge but it creates atmosphere I've only ever seen before in the Thunderforce games. It's borderline 32-bit quality. It's an easy game, and unserviced Mega CD and Sega CD players will struggle with it (as the CD is continually being accessed) but it's definitely one to own and won't cost you much. Silpheed remains one of the best examples of what 16-bit gaming can achieve. ■

SILPHEED
Press Start Button
©1993 GAME ARTS



Title:
SilpHeed

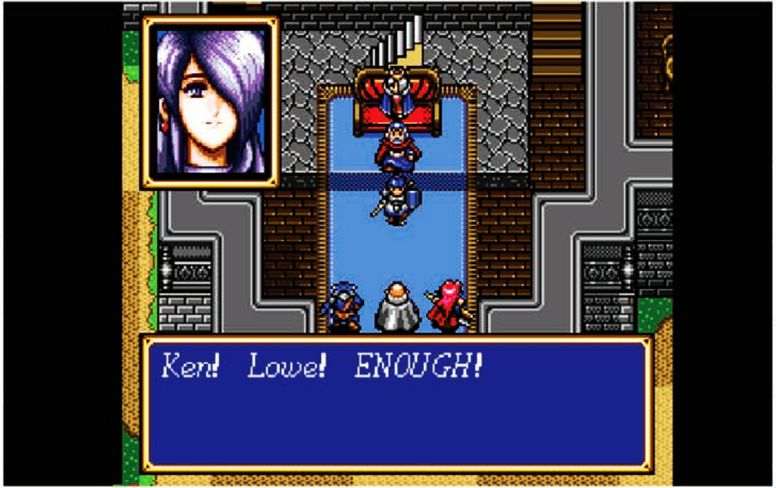
Genre:
Awesome Side Scrolling Shoot'em up

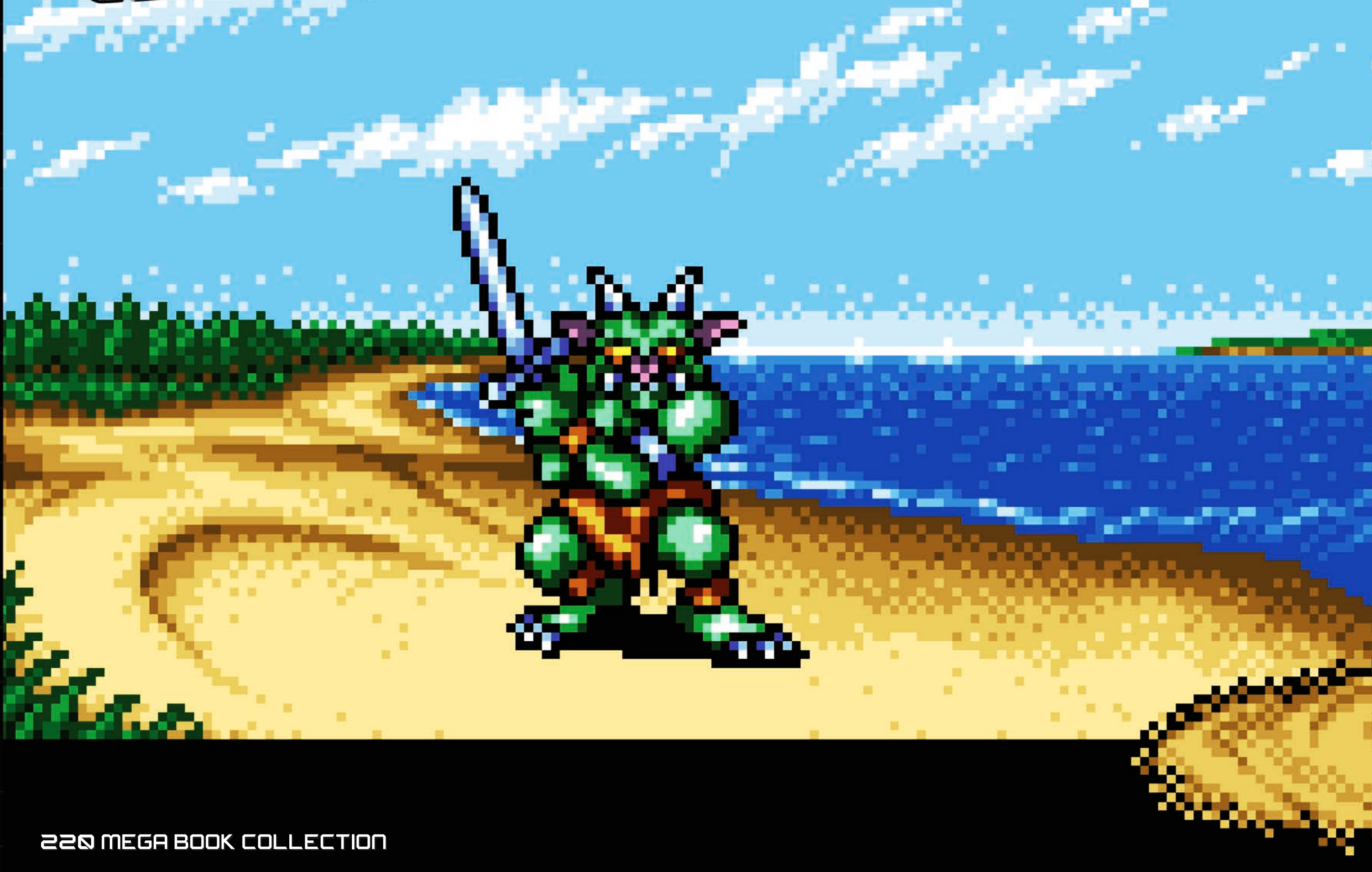
Developer:
Game Arts

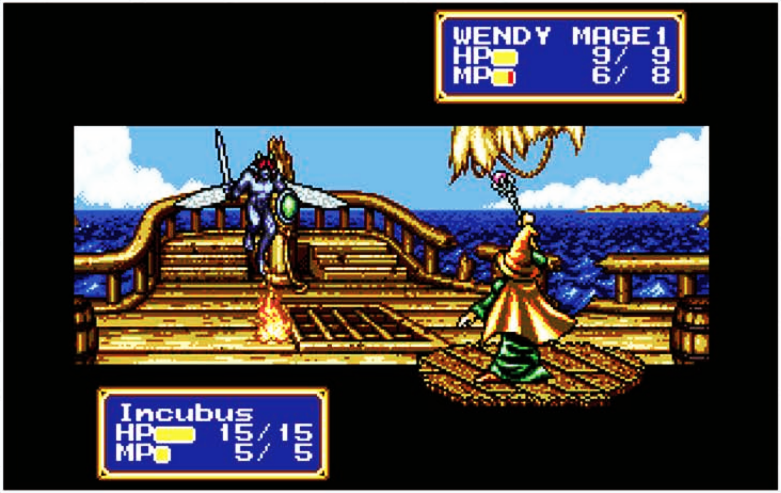
Year Released:
1993

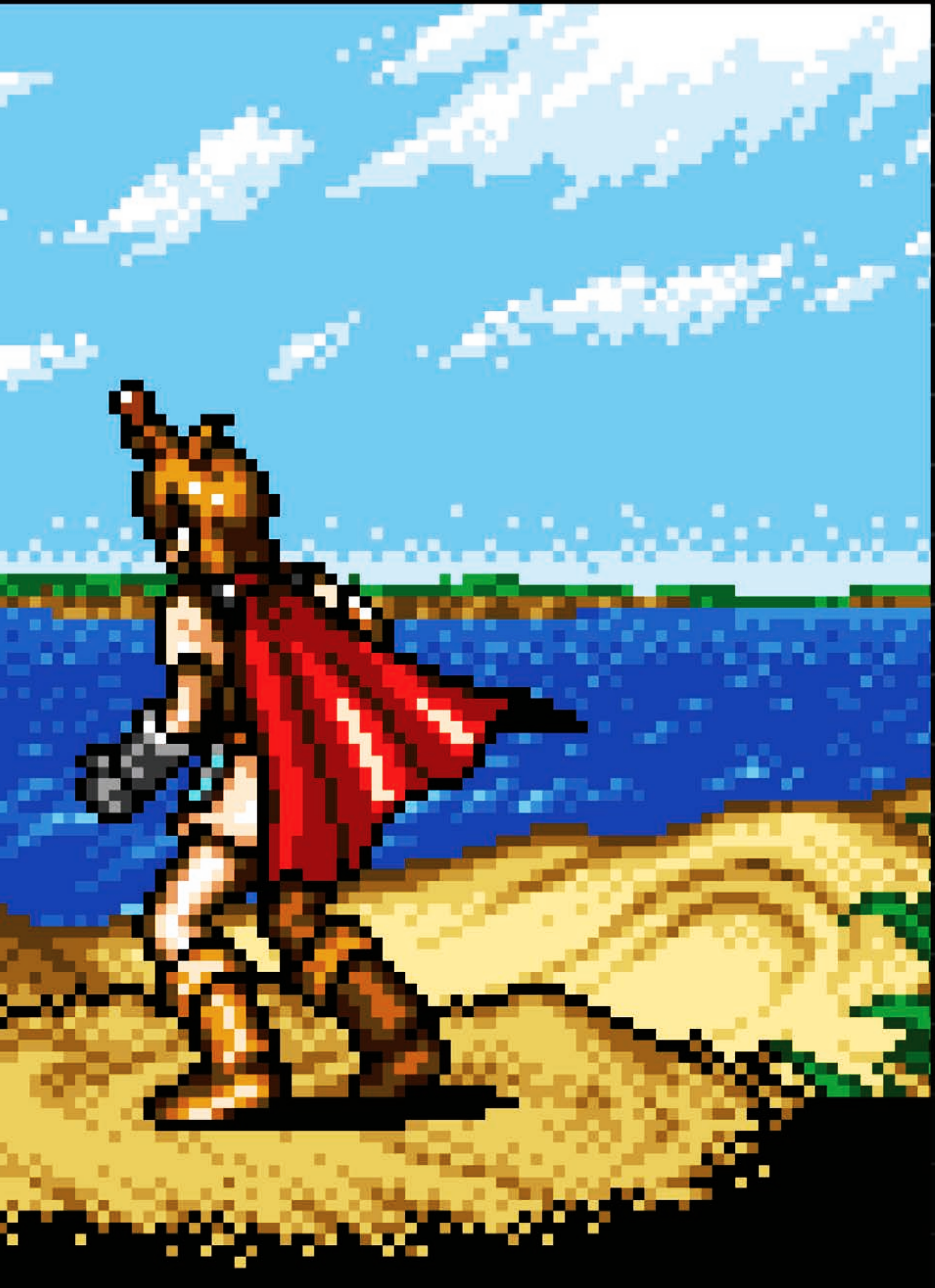
Publisher:
Sega

SHINING FORCE CD
MEGA-CD
SEGA
SHINING FORCE CD
COMPACT disc


Ken! Lowe! ENOUGH!







Shining Force CD -

Following the defeat of Dark Dragon by the hands of the original Shining Force, peace returned to the land of Rune. Decades had passed since those dark days and the heroes of the Shining Force eventually went their separate ways. However, a grand wizard by the name of Iom has harnessed a mass of evil forces and war has returned to the land once more. A new Shining Force team steps up to defend their land against the new evil. If Mega Drive fans were left disappointed when Game Gear owners got two Shining Force games for themselves, then things were made right when Sega compiled both Shining Force Gaiden and Shining Force II: The Sword of Hajya in one Mega CD package. Fans of the original games will feel right at home here: tactical role-playing with plenty of adventure, exploring towns and land, turn-based battles, gathering team members, acquiring weapons, promoting and upgrading members.

This isn't just a straight conversion from the Game Gear to Mega CD either. Content wise, there is an additional chapter as well as a challenge scenario not seen before. The aesthetics have also been spruced up from the original version with the graphics greatly improved on and an CD quality soundtrack added. ■

SHINING FORCE CD TM
PRESS START BUTTON
TM & © SEGA 1994,1995
PRESENTED BY SONIC

Title:
Shining Force CD

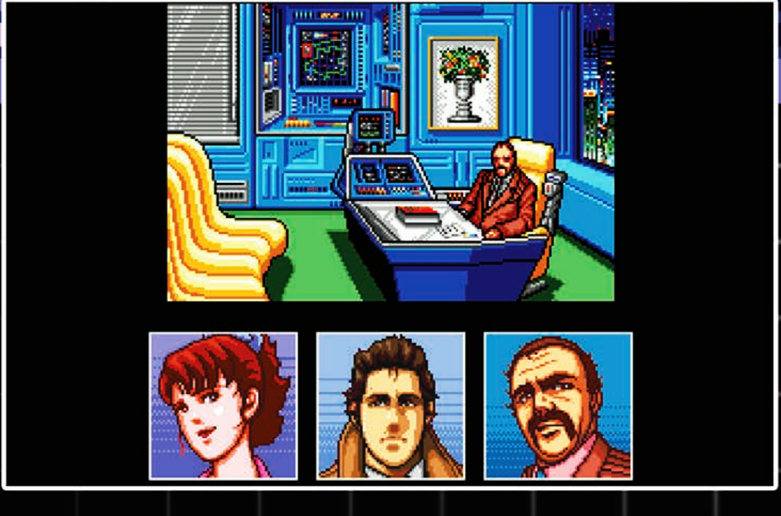
Genre:
Fantasy RPG Title

Developer:
Sonic Software Planning

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega

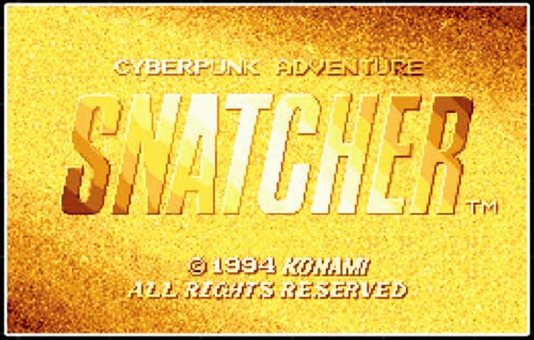
KONAMI
SEGA MEGA-CD
SNATCHER
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM



Snatcher -

He might be most well-known for the Metal Gear series, but Snatcher is the game that solidified Hideo Kojima's reputation as an expert storyteller. The foundations of the game's plot match Blade Runner's almost exactly and less said about 'The Catastrophe' the better! Snatcher has two gameplay elements – the major one is exploration of areas, puzzle solving and interacting with the game's many characters via a simple menu system. The other is a selection of simple shooter sections where various robotic bugs or other creatures of the night can attack you. Thankfully there's not too many of those.

You end up feeling really sorry for your 'Junker' Gillian (pronounced with a solid 'G') as he discovers body after body (even though this version is censored compared to the original PC one). He also has to put up with his sidekick 'Metal Gear' explaining absolutely everything every five seconds and making you feel guilty for not calling your wife. It does allow you to save though. In typical Kojima fashion, you end up watching more than playing. Yes, you can eliminate most menu items fairly quickly and it's a shame the voice acting is threadbare (you'll do a lot of reading) but the graphics, superb soundtrack and compelling plot makes this one of the best experiences on the Mega-CD/Sega CD.



CYBERPUNK ADVENTURE

SNATCHER™

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Title:
Snatcher

Genre:
Cyberpunk Novella Adventure Title

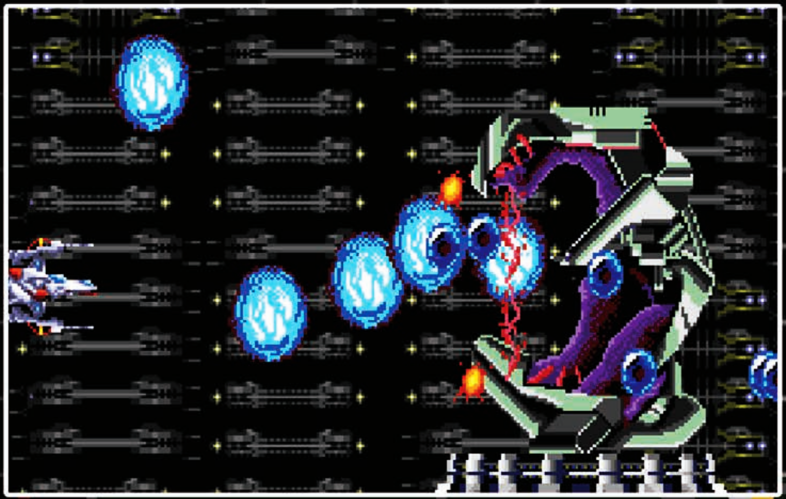
Developer:
Konami Co., Ltd.

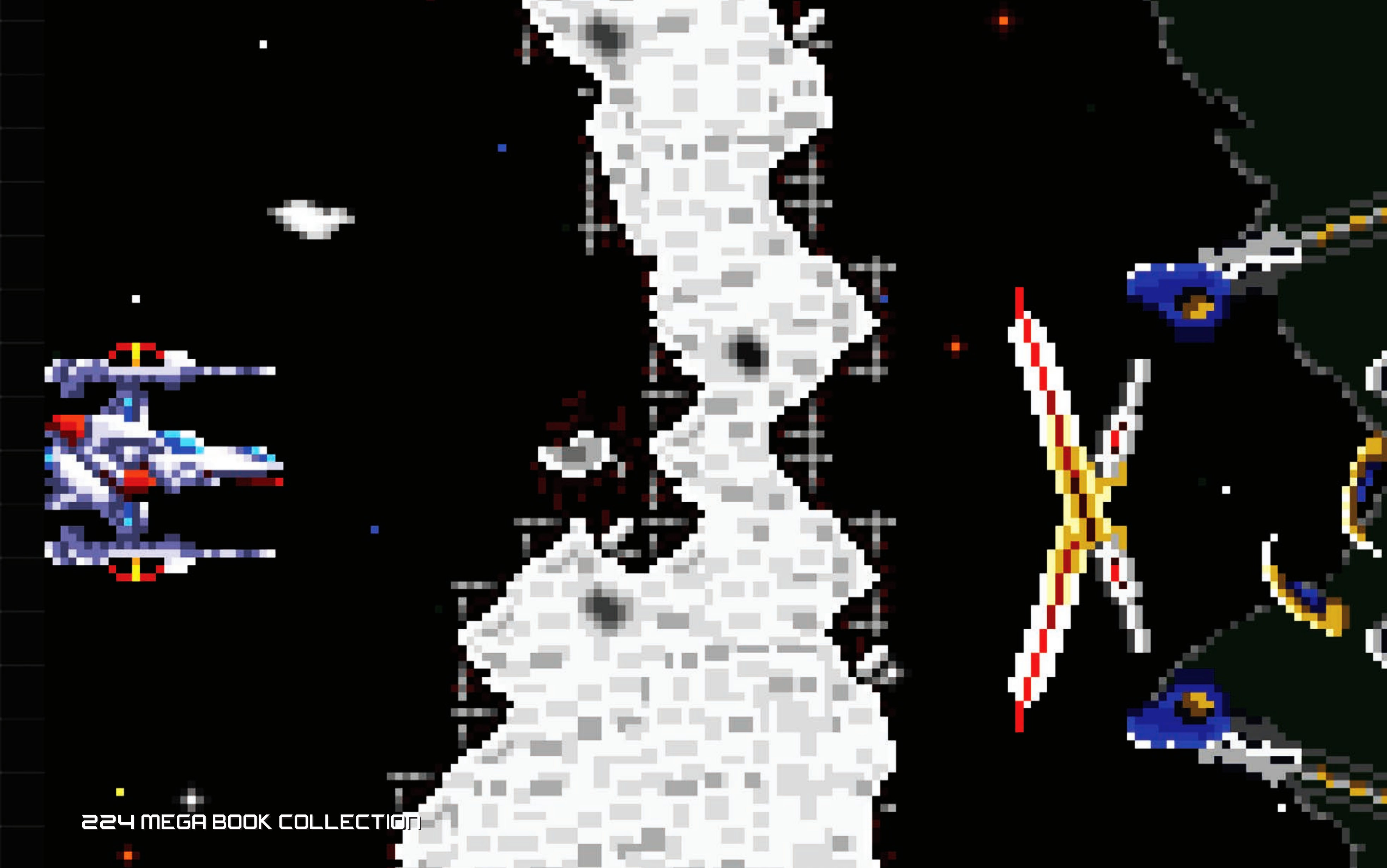
Year Released:
1994

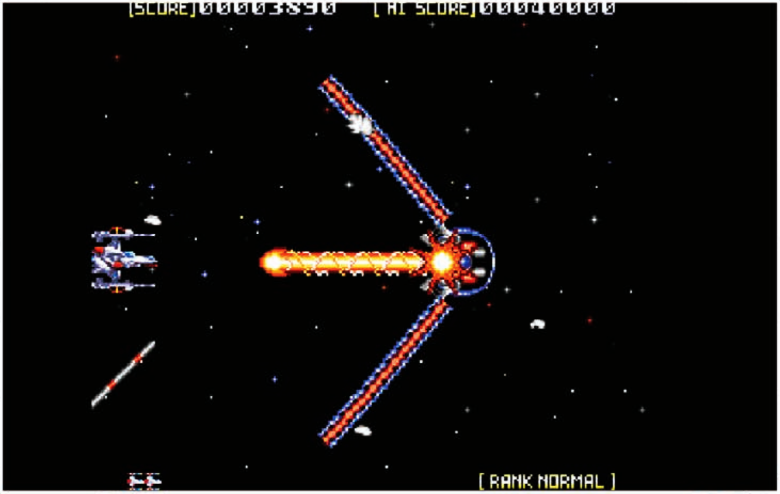
Publisher:
Konami

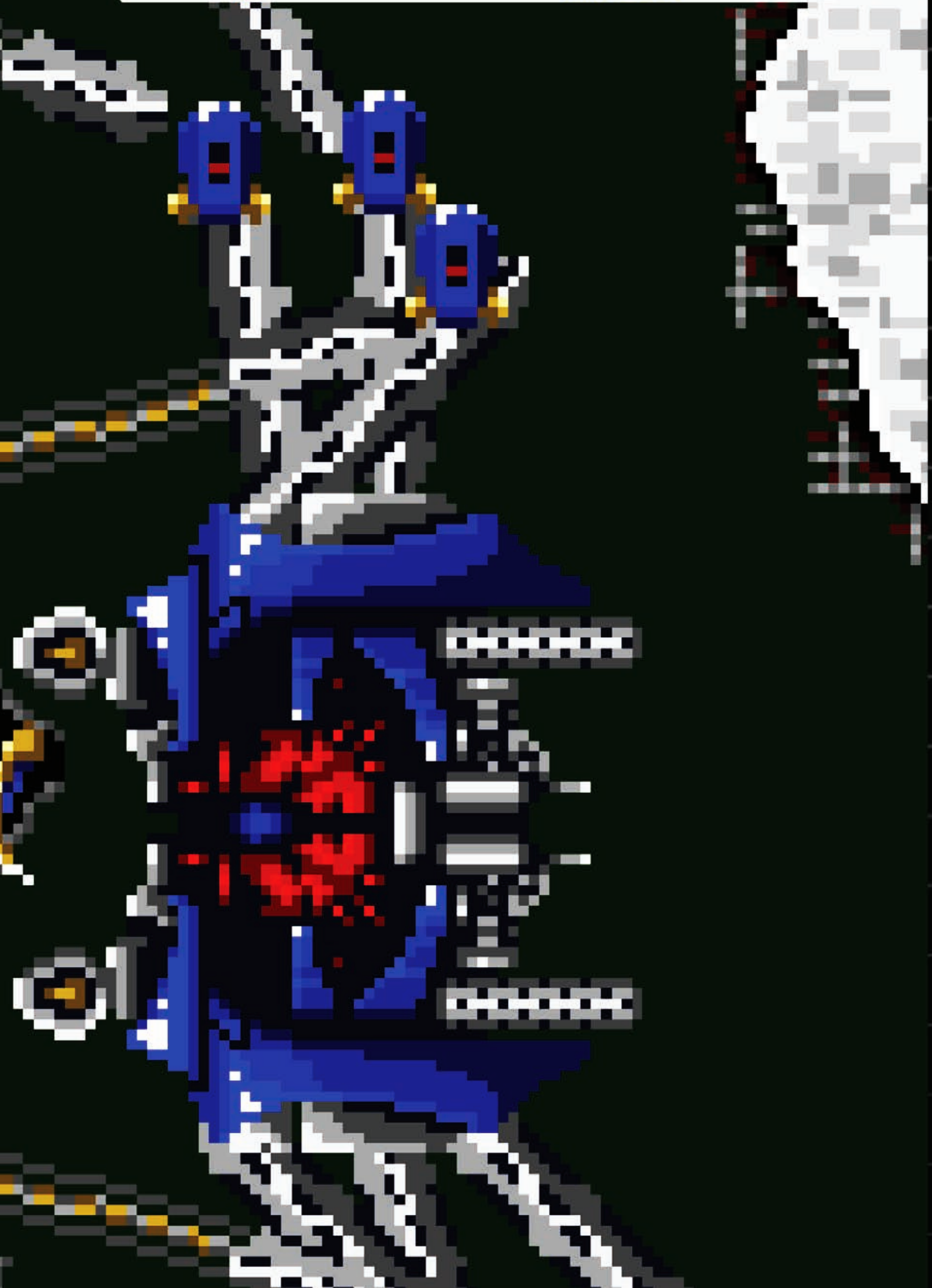
Metal Gear
This is Outer Heaven.

SEGA
MEGA-CD
MEGA-CD
COBRA COMMAND
MEGA-CD
SOL-FEACE
SOL-FEACE
670-2764
©WOLF TEAM
©1992 SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. Made in Japan
ONLY FOR USE WITH PAL AND FRENCH SECAM MEGA-CD SYSTEMS









Sol-Feace -

Sol Feace leads with a dark narrative, detailing a future where an oppressive machine called the GCS-WT has taken over 300 solar systems. After humans try to overthrow it, the GCS-WT begins the systematic annihilation of humanity. Luckily, a scientist figures out how to hack the machine and manages to deactivate it for 300 hours. With little time to spare, the game begins and it's up to the player to pilot Sol Feace in a final desperate effort to save humanity. The game-play is delivered in the form of a side scrolling shoot 'em up, with multiple levels leading to the final encounter with the evil GCS-WT on Earth. Between levels, a short scene shows the Sol Feace travelling to a new destination, providing some context for the new areas while giving a strong sense of progression. Players can shoot forwards and collect power-ups to expand their fire power.

Additional guns are added to cover greater range. With the addition of lasers and the like, players can develop strong offensive capabilities, but will lose it all when damaged. The voice overs, various cut scenes and challenging game-play all blend brilliantly to make Sol Feace a must have title for the SEGA CD. ■

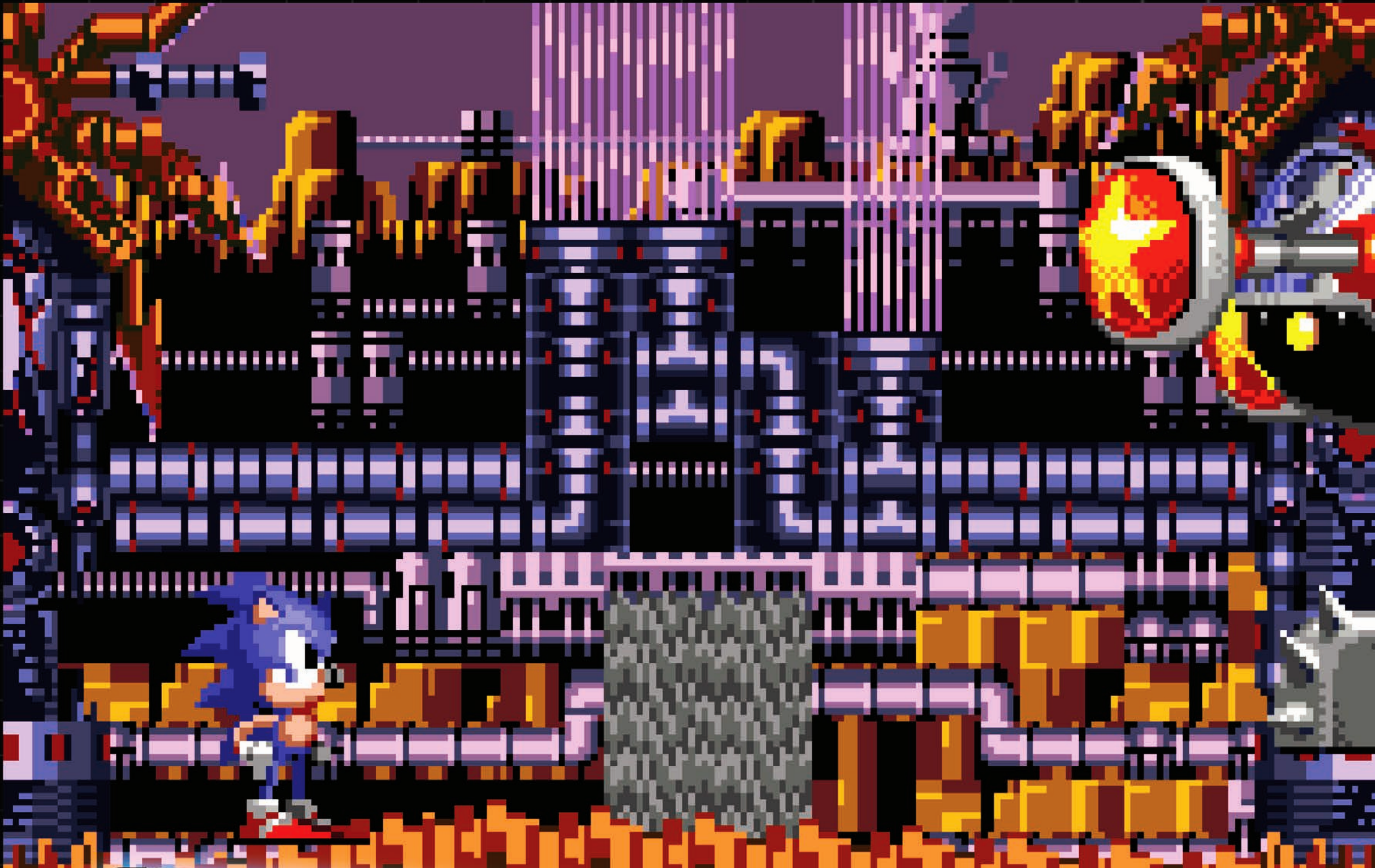
Title:
Sol-Fence

Genre:
Classic Shoot'em Up Title

Developer:
Wolf Team

Year Released:
1992

Publisher:
SEGA Inc.



COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
SONIC CD
MEGA-CD
SONIC CD
4407
SEGA
670-4103-50

SCORE 900
TIME 3'19"93
RINGS 71
x3

Sonic CD -

The previous game that caused me to pull an all-nighter is Sackboy: A Big Adventure but this doesn't mean all games that resulted in pulling an all-nighter are addictive and enjoyable. Sonic CD doesn't hold up compared to when I played it during my childhood. If I could go back in time, I'll tell little me not to play this game again when I'm older. Speaking of time travel, you're tasked with finding the Time Stones instead of the Chaos Emeralds. It's funny that the music track of the bad future version of the Quartz Quadrant level from the UK/European/Japanese soundtrack shares the same music sample with Captain Qwark's headquarters at Planet Umbris from the first Ratchet & Clank game. It's just a food for thought.

The levels contained too many colours for my liking. Not to mention, the levels are too busy/messy and the enemy placements are positioned without rhyme or reason. Overall, the game is convoluted in terms of how much you have to do to save Little Planet. The saving grace is obviously the soundtrack. I prefer the UK/Europe/Japan soundtrack than the US soundtrack. The bangers make me not want to save the planet. ■

SONIC CD
THE HEDGEHOG
TM
PRESS START
TM & © 1993 SEGA

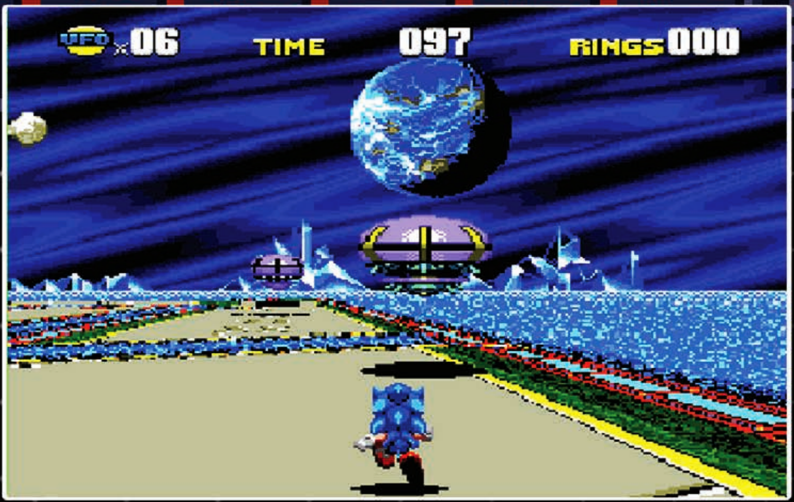
Title:
Sonic CD

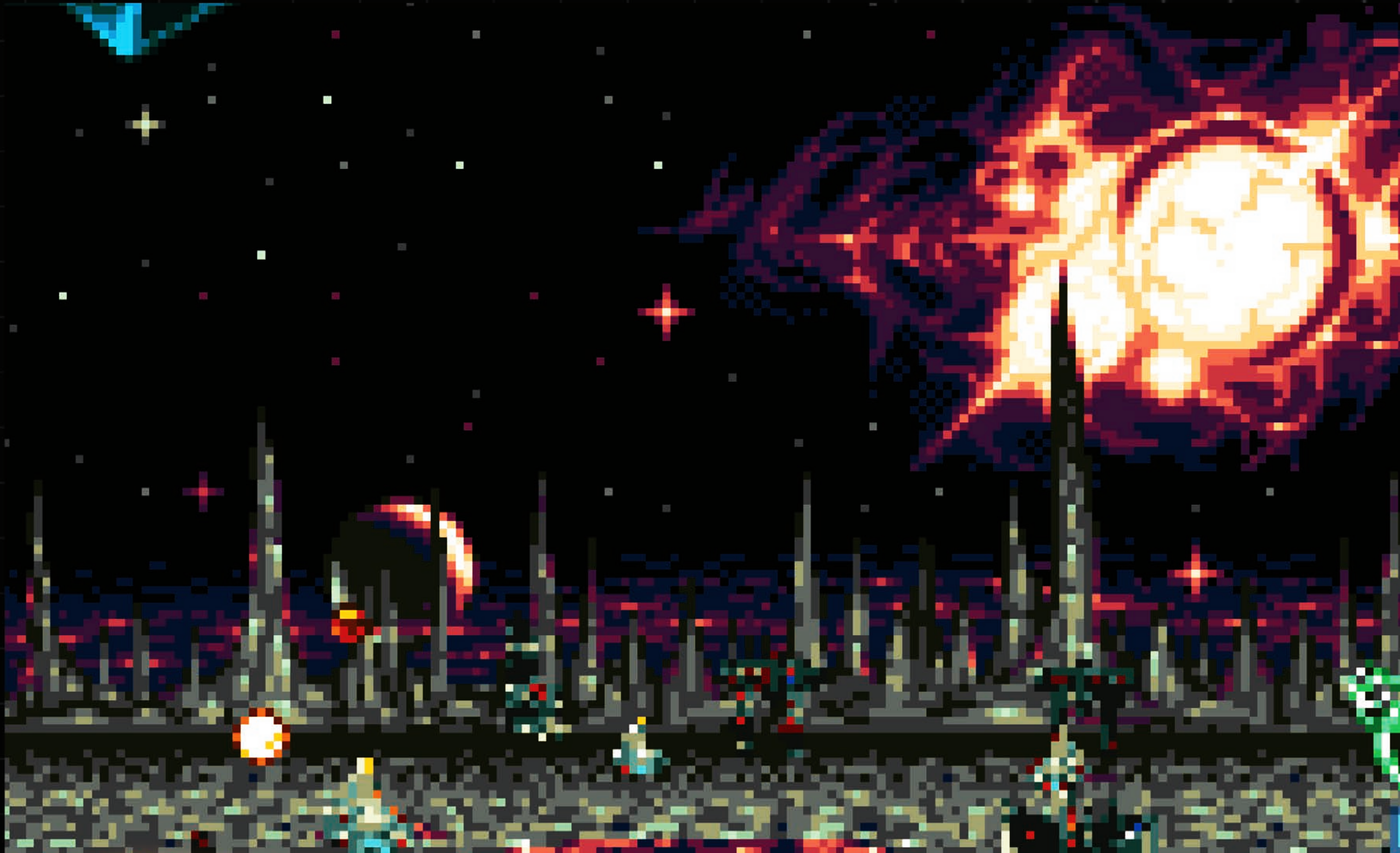
Genre:
Sonic Action Adventure Platform Title

Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

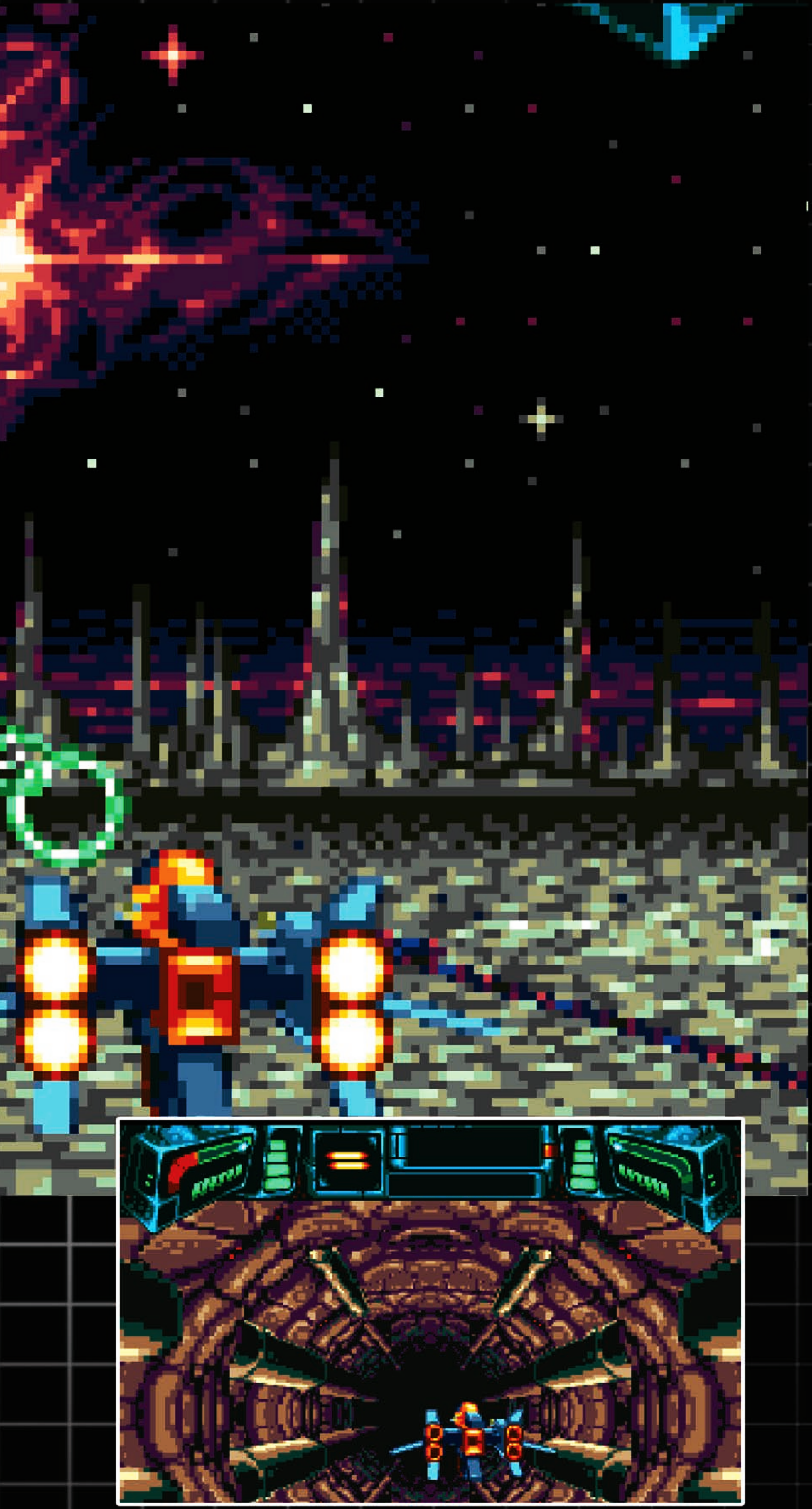
Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.





SEGA MEGA-CD
SOULSTAR
MEGA-CD
SOUL STAR
CORE DESIGN LIMITED
SEGA
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD™ SYSTEM



Soulstar -

Released on the SEGA CD in 1994, SoulStar makes full use of the hardware available to produce the most convincing 3D piloting experience available on the system. While it doesn't use polygons, the use of smooth sprite scaling is convincing, and the CD audio is used to offer a fully narrated story with in-game dialogue to guide the player. SoulStar is special because its levels are split into two distinct sections. The first half is an on-rails shooter, where players must fly their ship towards a gigantic enemy base, and battle imposing enemies to gain access. Once the players have weaved all the way to the end of the first section, they are able to enter the giant structures to begin part two.

The interior fully encloses a battleground where players are given a full 360 degrees of movement. Players must destroy various components of the base, before sirens wail and flashing red lights bathe the area. It's then time to reach a designated location where they will be fired through a wormhole to safety. It captures a similar tension made popular in the famous Star Wars trench run, and it really sells the high pressure of the in-game scenario. ■

SOUL STAR
1 PLAYER START
2 PLAYER START
OPTIONS
CORE
SEGA™
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.
©1994 CORE DESIGN LTD.

Title:
Soulstar

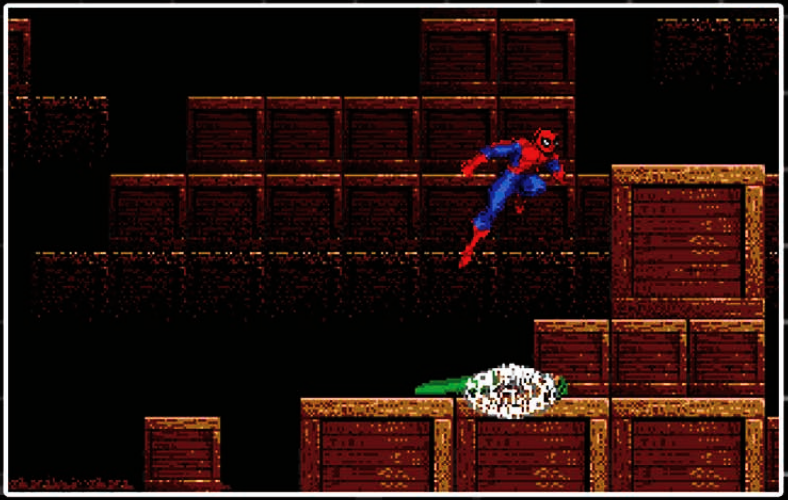
Genre:
3D Perspective Action Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Core Design Ltd.

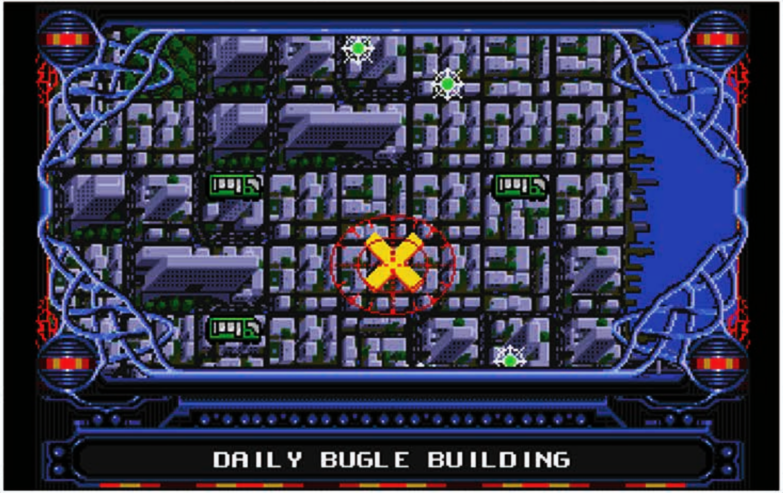
Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Core Design Ltd.

SEGA
MEGA-CD
COMPACT disc
MARVEL COMICS
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN vs. THE KINGPIN
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VS. THE KINGPIN
4412
670-3452-50



NYC
7
LIFE
WEB



NYC
12
TIME 23:55

The Amazing
Spider-Man vs. Kingpin -

Enter a vicious web of danger and disaster! The Kingpin of Crime frames Spider-Man for planting a bomb in New York and Spidey's only hope is to find the keys to the bomb's location before it explodes. You must help Spider-Man stick it to the Kingpin and his horde of vicious assassins along the way. Enter hand-to-hand combat with Dr Octopus! Put the Sandman to sleep! Use dazzling acrobatics to take on the Lizard, Hobgoblin and Venom! Dodge Electro's amped-up charge! Don't be fooled by the new trickery of Mysterio and the villainy of the Vulture! Take aim with Spidey's gadgets. Shoot webs! Stick to walls and ceilings! Swing from skyscrapers!

The game has a lot of animated cutscenes throughout, is animated fairly well and succeeds very nicely on a Mega-CD level. It's also important to note that the soundtrack to this game is phenomenal, written by Spencer Nilsson who also did the Sonic CD soundtrack. The Amazing Spider-Man for Mega-CD is a solid title that respects the source material. They even got talent from the 80s Turtle cartoon to voice some of the characters most notably the voice of Splinter (Peter Renaday) as Kingpin. The graphics are very colourful and has a comic book feel. It's a pretty long game backed by a password system in case it gets too tedious to play through. ■

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP INC (C)1993
PRESS START
SPIDER-MAN
VS.
KINGPIN

Title:
The Amazing Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin

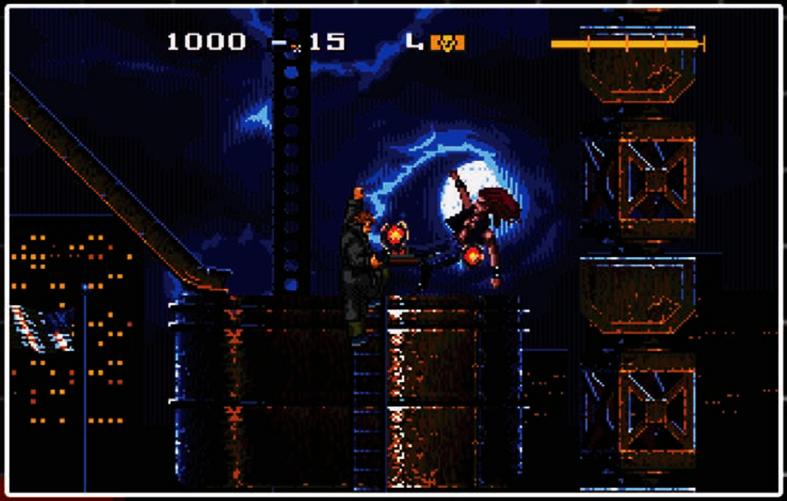
Genre:
Marvel Super Hero Scrolling Beat'em up

Developer:
Sega Enterprises, Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Sega

COMPACT disc
SEGA
MEGA-CD
PG
THE TERMINATOR
Virgin
THE TERMINATOR
MEGA-CD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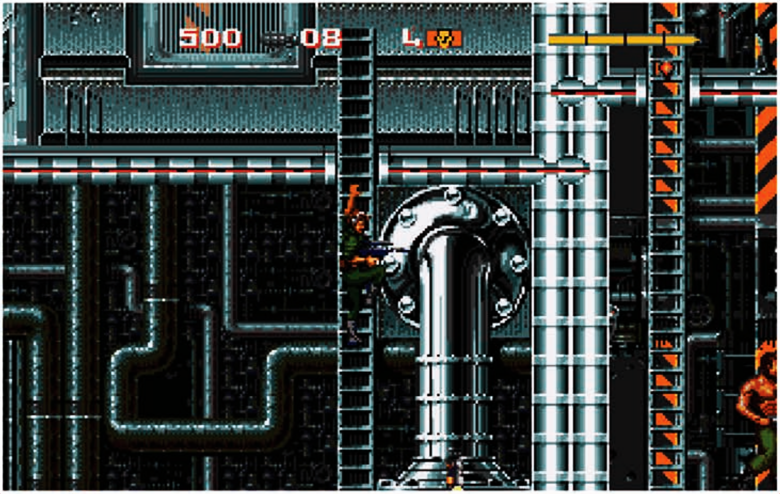
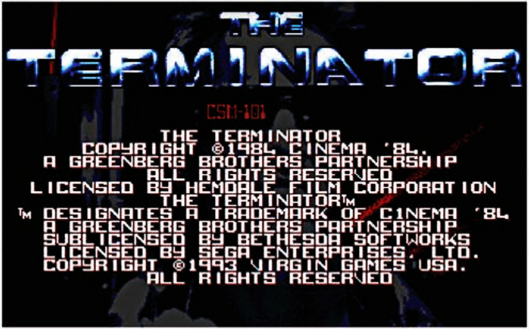
4



The Terminator -

In the future, a resistance of humans fights a war against the machines. One of the machines' ground soldiers, known as a terminator, is sent back in time to the present day to kill the mother of the future resistance leader. To counter this move, the resistance also send one of their soldiers back in time to hunt down and destroy the terminator. Based on The Terminator film from 1984, this run and gun game puts the player in Kyle Reese's shoes with the task of traversing the many hazardous levels. In the future, Kyle will need to deal with various machines such as terminator models, while in the present, there are plenty of street punks and bikers to overcome on the way to hunting down the time-travelling terminator.

Thankfully, Kyle has many weapons at his disposal to take out the machines, including various rifles, bombs and grenades. Power ups can also be picked up which can restore health or upgrade the weapon. The Mega Drive version of The Terminator is a decent enough game in its own right, but the action is over fairly quickly. The Mega CD version, however, is entirely revamped, with new level design, new gameplay mechanics, new enemies, new and improved visuals and an impressive soundtrack. ■



THE TERMINATOR
COPYRIGHT ©1984 CINEMA '84.
A GREENBERG BROTHERS PARTNERSHIP
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
LICENSED BY HEMDALE FILM CORPORATION
THE TERMINATOR™
™ DESIGNATES A TRADEMARK OF CINEMA '84
A GREENBERG BROTHERS PARTNERSHIP
SUBLICENSED BY BETHESDA SOFTWORKS
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.
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ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Title:
The Terminator

Genre:
Arcade Action Movie-Tie-Title

Developer:
Virgin Games, Inc.

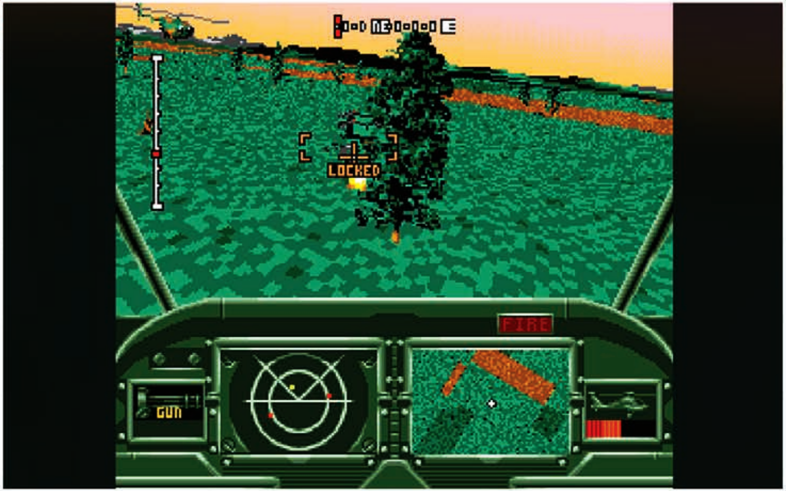
Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Virgin Games, Inc.

DANGER

SEGA
MEGA-CD
THUNDERHAWK
CORE DESIGN LIMITED
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd for play on the SEGA MEGA-CD SYSTEM

FIRE
GUN



Thunder Hawk -

Strap into your AH-3 Thunderstrike and fly that sacred bird straight into the jaws of terror. Cruise into Panama and rain on a guerrilla parade with deadly whistler rockets... Tour the South Seas and test out your AFG Autocannon on a fleet of pirate gunboats... Eradicate terrorist strongholds with your GR-3's... With a little luck, you just might last long enough to run a second mission. Core Design had blossomed into the most prominent Mega-CD developer within a year. After commissioned work for Sony and JVC, the small software company from Derby now wanted to show what the hardware of the Mega-CD was capable of and presented Thunderhawk, which only has the name in common with Core's original for the Commodore Amiga computer.

With the combat helicopter Thunderhawk you take up the fight against the worldwide evil. You can select a total of ten missions, which are again divided into several individual missions. Before each start you will receive a detailed briefing from the commander who explains the mission and objectives using a map. The technology used by programmer Mark Avory is impressive and innovative. The floor consists of a patchwork of dots that are individually zoomed and rotated depending on the direction of flight. This was an exceptional title for the Mega-CD and proved yet again what the system was capable of, especially when Core Design were involved. ■

THUNDERHAWK
PRESS START

Title:
Thunder Hawk

Genre:
First Person Action Flight Simulator

Developer:
Core Design Ltd.

Year Released:
1993

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
MEGA-CD
COMPACT disc
WONDER DOG
670-4382

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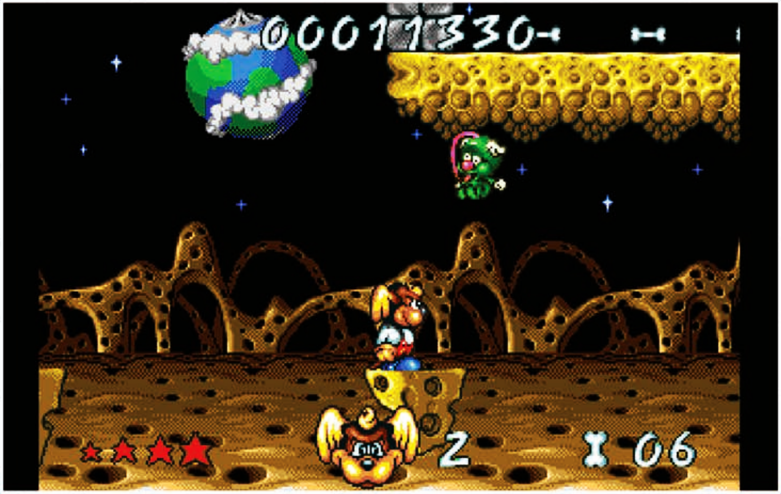
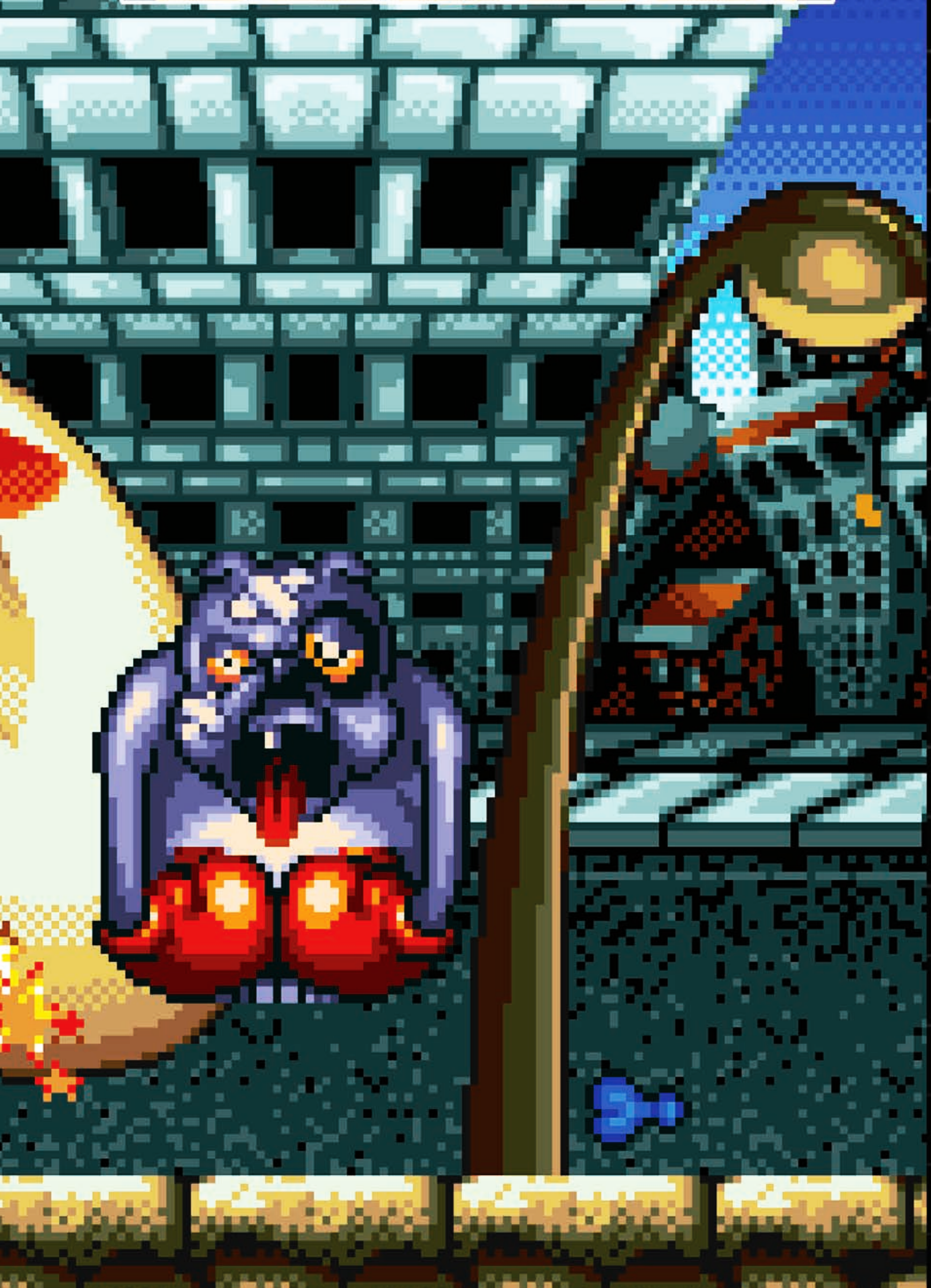
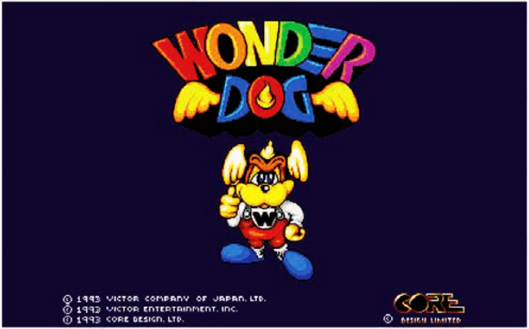




Wonder Dog -

Sometimes a hidden gem doesn't always mean the same thing. For a few people it stands for the very best of something on a console or computer, others see it as a game that nobody has heard about. The problem with both of these definitions is that what's good for one person isn't always the same for another. This fortunately isn't the case with Core Design's little classic Wonder Dog. So named because it was designed to be a description of the central character, a dog, and the console it was made for, the WonderMega. It's one of those games that has a massively important role in a specific period of the games industry.

Now the power of the CD format allowed Core to tell the story in animation of how an alien dog lands on planet Earth in a massive 'bone' shaped spaceship and how he finds a new friend and how it's all taken away from him. Like Earthworm Jim he grabs a trusty powered space suit and sets off to save his new friend and the planet K-9 from a combination of bad humans but mostly creatures from the evil Pit Bully's army. It's all superbly tied in under the whole canine theme and works a treat story wise. The graphics are clearly Core Design through and through and look so much like 'Chuck Rock' meets 'Wolfchild'. This is a little gem of a title and again another one not to be missed in your Mega-CD collection. Woof woof. ■


WONDER DOG
© 1993 VICTOR COMPANY OF JAPAN, LTD.
© 1992 VICTOR ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
© 1993 CORE DESIGN, LTD.
CORE
© DESIGN LIMITED

Title:
Wonder Dog

Genre:
Side Scrolling Action Platformer

Developer:
Core Design Ltd.

Year Released:
1992

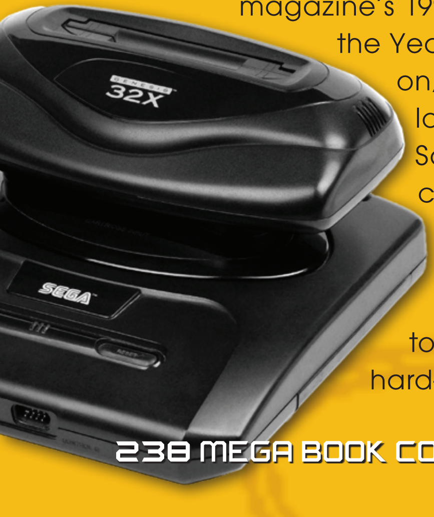
Publisher:
Sega

SEGA 32X™

THE ULTIMATE ADD-ON THAT PROMISED NEXT GEN GAMING

In the early 90s, the video game industry was obsessed with bits. The average consumer didn't understand what a bit actually was. But they did know one thing: the more bits, the better. Video game companies used this to their advantage with marketing. Sega and Nintendo battled for the top spot in the market with their 16-bit consoles, the Sega Mega Drive and the Super Nintendo. But with success came pressure to stay ahead of the curve: they needed to come up with the next big thing. This pressure built in 1993 when Atari released their 64-bit console, the Jaguar. In their advertisements, Atari challenged customers to do the math. It was an enticement to consumers in a dig at their competition. This system ultimately didn't sell well, but in terms of sheer power, Atari's 64-bit system had both Sega's and Nintendo's 16-bit systems beat. Atari's powerful new console sent a strong message, but they weren't the only company making waves.

The 3DO was a 32-bit console released in late 1993 and was even named Time magazine's 1993 Product of the Year. As 1994 wore on, there was a lot of buzz about Sony's upcoming console. Sega in particular felt the heat: they knew that to maintain their hard-fought spot as the scrappy, edgy competitor to Nintendo, they had to be cutting edge. But Sega of Japan and Sega of America had very different ideas on what their next move should be. Success played a big role in their divergent strategies. The Sega Genesis, known as the Mega Drive outside of North America, debuted in 1988 in Japan and didn't make a huge splash.



> *"Even the die-hard Sega fans were starting to ask what the heck we were thinking? "*

By 1994 the Mega Drive felt like old news: Sega of Japan was ready to move on. But in America, the Genesis was in the midst of a rebirth. In the early 90s, a newly hired Sega of America president, **Tom Kalinske**, gave Nintendo a run for its money: he ran an aggressive anti-Nintendo marketing campaign, slashed the price of the Genesis, and packaged the console with Sonic the Hedgehog. The 16-bit Genesis wasn't exactly cutting-edge technology, but it was fun, and it gave Nintendo some serious competition. Sega's competing strategies came to clash at a January 1994 meeting during the winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Executives from Sega of America met in a hotel room and conferenced in Sega CEO **Hayao Nakayama,** Nakayama wanted a 32-bit cartridge-based system out in time for the 1994 holiday season in order to keep Sega ahead of the curve and help bridge the gap between the Mega Drive and future consoles. His suggestion was essentially a 32-bit Sega Genesis. Tom Kalinske didn't like the idea.

As far as he was concerned, the Genesis was still selling well and there was no gap that needed to be bridged. Sega of America's head of research and development **Joe Miller** was also resistant. According to former Sega of America producer **Michael Latham**, Miller said, "Oh, that's just a horrible idea. If all you're going to do is enhance the system, you should make it an add on. If it's a new system with legitimate new software? Great!, but if the only thing it does is double the colours". Miller doesn't recall being quite that blunt. After some debate, they agreed to make it an add-on with Sega of America leading development and Sega of Japan providing any additional resources needed. This add-on would have to be ready by the 1994 holiday season, giving Sega less than a year. It was a tall order, but not entirely out of the box. After all, Sega already had experience building add-ons for the

SEGA
32X
The 32-Bit Arcade Upgrade for Genesis™ and Sega CD™
32X Power & Performance
40 times faster than 16-bit
32,768 simultaneous colors
Full library of NEW 32-bit 32X games!
GENESIS

Front View - Sega 32x American box release

32X Power & Performance
32X

Rear View - Sega 32x American box release system. In 1989 they debuted the Power Base Converter, which allowed players to play Master System games on the Genesis. A few years later, in 1992, they put out the Mega-CD, which was an expensive but technologically advanced add-on that allowed users to play CD-based games. It was a difficult process: the team had just months to complete the product, which was codenamed ***Project Mars.***

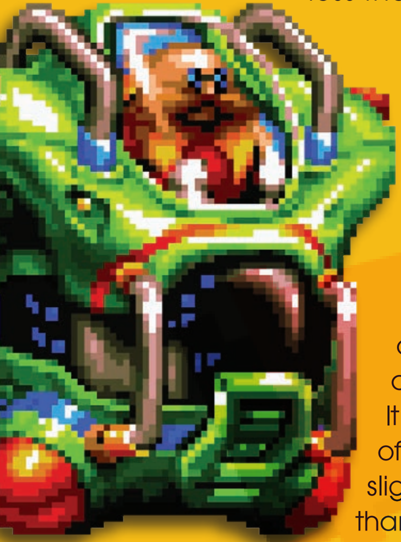
Sega 32x Add-on Device (Sega Mushroom)
For the Sega Genesis

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Sega of America, Sega of Japan was quietly developing their own 32-bit system, which would eventually become the Sega Saturn. According to Joe Miller, ***Project Mars*** had three initial prototypes. The first two were not much of an improvement over the Genesis, but the third prototype suggested by Sega of Japan contained two ***Hitachi SH-2*** 32-bit processors, the same processors that would be used in the Saturn. It was a bit more complex than the Mega Drive hardware, but there was a strategy behind it. Sega of Japan argued that developers could learn to work with these new chips in preparation for ***Project Saturn***, which was slowly coming to fruition. Sega's new plan was that the Saturn would be their next big console, while ***Project Mars*** would be a cheaper alternative for consumers who weren't quite ready to take the leap. Along with new processors came a more powerful VDP with more than 32,000 on screen colours, 3D graphics support, enhanced sprite scaling and rotation, and two more digital sound channels. On paper, it was quite an upgrade for the Sega Genesis / Mega Drive. The team initially called it the Genesis Super 32X and eventually shortened it to 32X. By the summer of 1994, Sega was ready and showed off the 32X's near final prototype at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago where it went over fairly well. Sega pitched it as an inexpensive way for players to enjoy 32-bit technology while also being able to play the enormous backlog of Genesis/Mega Drive titles. They also promised a slew of new 32-bit games that would be available when the 32X launched that November. They also mentioned a few dozen companies who planned to develop games for the 32X. It was a who's who of video game makers: ***Acclaim***, ***Activision***, ***Capcom***, ***Konami*** and more. Sega finalised the design that fall. The end result of months of hard work was an add-on that inserted into the Genesis/Mega Drive cartridge slot, transforming the 16-bit system into a 32-bit one. Some developers jokingly called it the **Sega Mushroom**.

"Many of the developers had been planning games for the 32x went in a new direction."

Sega launched a $10 million ad campaign to promote the 32X. They were known for edgy in your face ads, but these push the envelope even further by being surprisingly sexual. They highlighted the 32X's power and speed and poked fun at how the add-on mounts the Genesis/Mega Drive. For a little while the 32X looked like it might just beat the odds as adverts and media coverage generated a lot of buzz. But then a bombshell: Sega of Japan announced that their new console, the **Sega Saturn**, would launch in Japan in November 1994. The exact same time as the 32X launch. All the burgeoning momentum for the 32X came to a screeching halt. With the Saturn launching in Japan, it would surely reach the rest of the world soon. Which begs the question: what was the point of this 32-bit add on? A few critics speculated that the 32X was a waste of money, a mere stopgap between the Mega Drive and the Saturn. **Trip Hawkins**, the founder of Electronic Arts, famously called it "a band aid". It didn't help matters when Sega threw a massive party for journalists that went horribly wrong. They flew reporters in from all over the country, put them up in a hotel in San Francisco and threw a party where a rapper took the stage to praise the 32X. But the music was too loud. And the few 32X games that were on display looked so unimpressive that very few journalists actually played them.

Despite these obstacles, Sega of America continued to market the system hard. In Sega Visions Magazine, they made their case: there are high end platforms that haven't been released yet, like Sega Saturn, so you could just wait. Or you can have it all now. The full tilt, top of the line, true 32-bit arcade experience, way better than the competition, for a phenomenal price of less than $150.



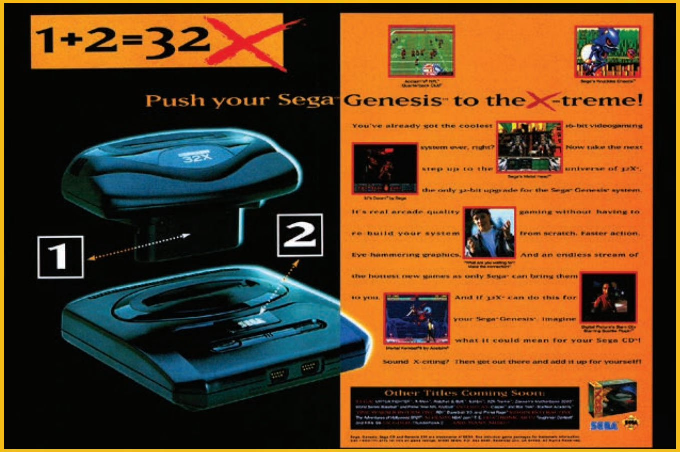
On 21 November 1994, the 32X launched in North America and sold fairly well. According to some reports demand outran the supply of the 600,000 units available at launch. It debuted at a price of $159.99. This was slightly more expensive than promised, but less than half of what the Sega Saturn would cost. A month later, the 32X launched in Europe and Japan. By this time, the Saturn had already launched in Japan which gave Japanese gamers little incentive to buy a 32X. The 32X came with an AC adapter, AV cables, connector cables, electromagnetic shield plates, and a spacer. It was compatible with the Genesis Model 1, Model 2 and the CDX. Hooking up the 32X is interesting. According to the manual, the electromagnetic shield plates need to be inserted into the Genesis/Mega Drive.

This was to prevent RF signal interference and to comply with FCC regulations. If the user had a Genesis/Mega drive Model 2 the spacer had to be attached to the bottom. Without it the 32X can wobble. Although honestly the 32X works fine without either of these attachments. The connector cable goes from the AV out on the Genesis/Mega Drive to the AV in on the 32X, then the AV cable goes from the 32X AV out to the television. The Genesis/Mega Drive and the 32X each require their own power, meaning there's a lot of plugs. Sega actually came out with their own power strip specifically designed to house all of these AC adapters. The 32X was designed to be a permanent addition to the Genesis/Mega Drive, so players could plug the 32X in play either a Genesis/Mega Drive game or a 32X game. There was plenty of buzz around the 32X when it debuted, but that fizzled fast, mainly because of the games. When they showed the add-on at the Consumer Electronics Show that summer, Sega had said that the 32X would have an extensive library of games, but only three titles were available when the system launched: Virtua Racing Deluxe, Doom and Star Wars Arcade. Virtua Racing is considered the best of the three launch titles. It was previously released on the Genesis/Mega Drive, but the 32X version is much improved as well as containing two new tracks and two new vehicles. It's close to the original arcade version and is a solid port.

"Sega sunk $10 million into advertising and publicly said they were going to support the system."

Sega 32x PAL / US game releases

Doom is a classic first-person shooter and was really big at the time, but the 32X version was rushed to meet deadlines. It definitely shows, the music isn't very pleasant, and this version is actually missing levels. Finally, there is Star Wars Arcade. Despite receiving mediocre scores from critics for repetitive gameplay, Star Wars Arcade was the best-selling 32X launch title. People just loved Star Wars so the game was a system seller. Slowly more games trickled in. Many of them were rushed through production, and it showed. The production time-lines were too tight for some of the titles which led to last minute scrambles and headaches for Sega, and disappointment for players. Those that did make it to market in time didn't take full advantage of the 32X's capabilities.



1+2=32X

Push your Sega Genesis to the X-treme!

You've already got the coolest 16-bit videogaming system ever, right? Now take the next step up to the universe of 32X, the only 32-bit upgrade for the Sega Genesis system. It's real arcade quality gaming without having to re-build your system from scratch. Faster action. Eye-hammering graphics. And an endless stream of the hottest new games as only Sega can bring them to you. And if 32X can do this for your Sega Genesis, imagine what it could mean for your Sega CD! Sound X-citing? Then get out there and add it up for yourself!

Other Titles Coming Soon:

Cosmic Carnage was so bad that Sega didn't even want to ship it out. And fans were particularly disappointed that a 3D Sonic game which had been teased at the Consumer Electronics Show was nowhere to be found. In fact, the 32X would never get a Sonic game. The closest that came was Knuckles Chaotix, a spinoff of the Sonic series that featured an interesting tether gameplay mechanic, with characters connected via a rubber band. The 1994 holiday season was rough on Sega but the 32X was only part of the problem because while their hot new add-on crashed and burned their competition raked in the cash. On

Sega Genesis & Sega 32x Combined

Front View - Sega 32x European box release

Rear View - Sega 32x European box release

the same day the 32X was released Nintendo released Donkey Kong Country. The game sold like crazy and would go on to become the third best-selling Super Nintendo game of all time, just behind Super Mario World and Super Mario All Stars. The game was a smash hit both with critics and players, but it was also a smack in the face to Nintendo's competition.

When Atari, Sega and 3DO zigged... Nintendo zagged... Atari's Jaguar, Sega's 32X and the 3DO chased power. Nintendo, on the other hand, created a really fun game that pushed hardware limits for their 16-bit system. For Sega especially, it was a bitter pill to swallow. Sales of the 32X dropped off sharply after the holiday season. Word was out, and critics and fans finally agreed the 32X was a mere stopgap. Many of the developers who had been planning games for the 32X went in a new direction. Some abandoned their projects entirely, while others reworked them for the Sega Saturn. But Sega wasn't ready to give up on the 32X just yet. They went back to their original idea for a 32-bit Genesis and announced the Sega Neptune. The Neptune would be a standalone console that could play 32X and Genesis/ Mega Drive games. It was slated to launch by the end of the year for less than $200, but as the 32X crashed and burned, and the date for the Saturn's North American launch grew closer, Sega scrapped the Neptune. During 1995 the price of the 32X dropped: from $160 to $99, before finally hitting a clearance price of $19.95. The 32X library eventually grew to include 40 titles, a handful of which you had to have the 32X and the Mega-CD/Sega CD to play, but none of the games were big enough to draw consumers to the system. Only months after the 32X debuted, it was forgotten. In October 1995, Sega CEO Hayao Nakayama cancelled all Sega consoles except the Saturn. It was a move to focus the company's resources on the latest console war, thus officially ending the short life of the 32X. All of this left a bad taste in the mouths of fans. They believed the Sega hype and they got burned for it.

Knuckles from Knuckles' Chaotix (Sega ©1995)

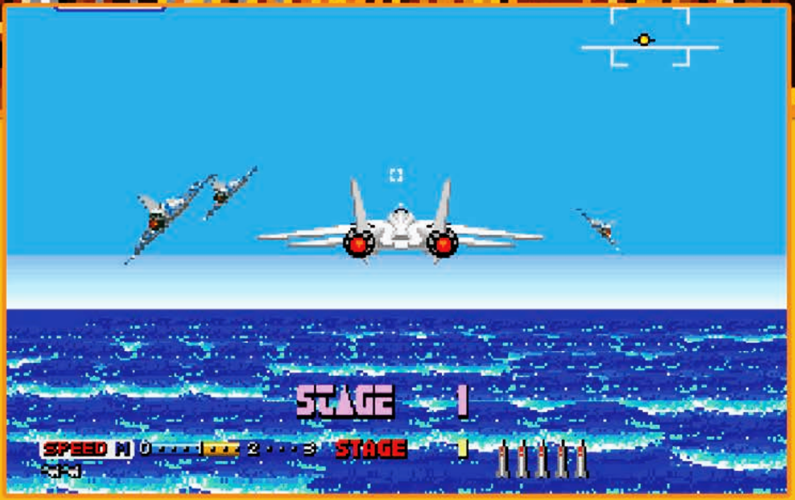
32X games didn't live up to expectations, and neither did the add0on itself. There were other smaller annoyances, too. People didn't like that the 32x needed its own AC adapter. The Genesis/Mega Drive already required one and so did the Mega-CD/ Sega CD. Taken as a whole, the system was bulky from the front and a mess of cords in the back. But that was nothing compared to how 32X owners felt when the Sega Saturn came out roughly six months later in North America. While critics argue that the 32X was just a placeholder, Sega of America didn't feel the same way. They sunk $10 million into advertising and publicly said they were going to support the system.

But poor sales ended that promise. ***Scott Bayless***, a senior producer at Sega of America said, *"I'm Joe gamer, and I decided to take the plunge and buy 32X now about 10 minutes later, you guys tell me I need to dump my 32X? And buy a Saturn, but now I'm broke!"*. The system was also a body blow to Sega's credibility. The first punch was Mega-CD and then along comes 32X: another rushed launch with a weak starting line-up. At that point, even the diehard Sega fans were starting to ask what the heck we were thinking?

The 32X is an impressive piece of engineering considering the constraints of the project. But the truth is, Sega should have scrapped the 32X before they brought it to market. The 32X damaged Sega's relationship with customers, game developers and game critics and did lasting damage to the company itself. They spent the early 90s threatening Nintendo's dominance of the video game industry. After the 32X, Sega lost its edge. Bayless recalled, *"Frankly, it made us look greedy and dumb to consumers. Something that a year earlier I couldn't have imagined people thinking about us. We were the cool kids."*

Sega Genesis / 32x / SegaCD Complete Suite

SEGA
AFTER BURNER
COMPLETE
32X
MEGADRIVE
SEGA
AFTER BURNER
COMPLETE
2 3 STAGE 2
SCORE 15850 HIT 2



After Burner Complete -

In 1987, Sega introduced the world to their version of a combat flight simulator with the arcade game After Burner. The game was highly successful and it spawned sequels as well as a number of ports to home systems. With the release of the 32X, Sega saw the opportunity to port the original title to the system. And just how good of a port is it? Let's find out. In After Burner the player controls an SSF-14 fighter armed with Vulcan guns, guided missiles, and afterburners with the goal of destroying two enemy microwave communication booster stations and crippling their global communications network. The game starts with your fighter taking off from the deck of the Sega Enterprise and the rest is history.

The action in After Burner is frenetic, non-stop, and exhilarating. The visuals of the game are beautiful, the animation is smooth, and the level of detail is excellent. The many landscapes keep things interesting, and it is always fun to see where you next end up when a level is finished. You enemies range from slick fighter jets to attack choppers and you better pay attention to their missiles because they'll track you and destroy you. It'll take some advanced manoeuvring to avoid them. Something that is very important in this type of game is the scaling of the enemy craft (particularly since they come at you at high speed) and, I must say, the 32X handles this very well. Anyone who enjoys the arcade version will have no issue enjoying this 32X version. So, be ready to become Top Gun! ■

AFTER BURNER ™
PRESS START BUTTON
COMPLETE
©SEGA 1987·1994

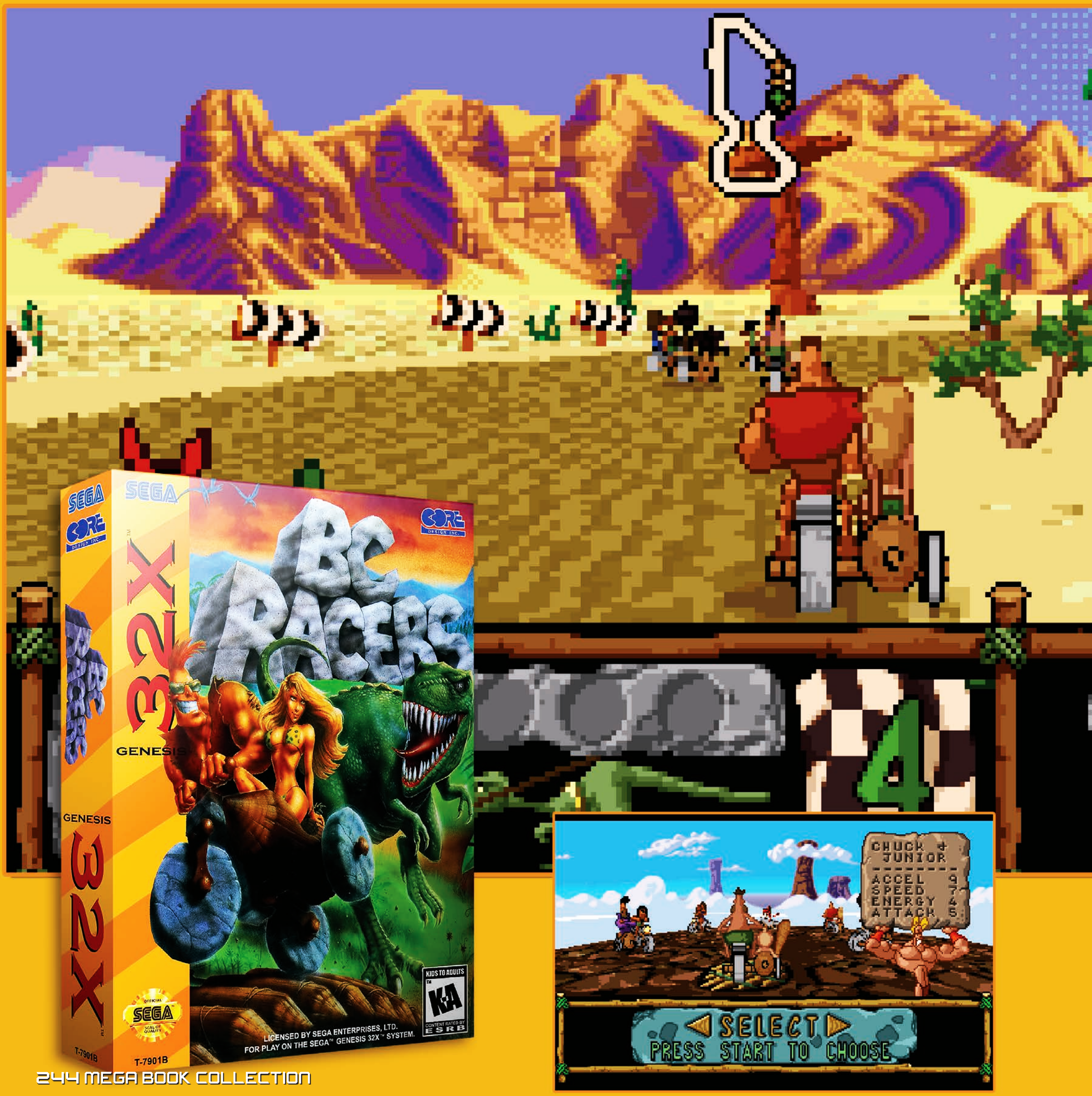
Title:
After Burner -Complete-

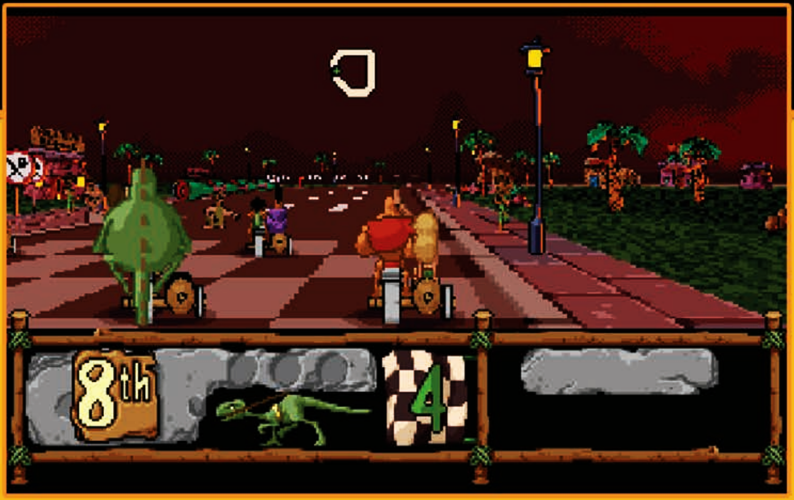
Genre:
Arcade Action Flight Shoot'em Up

Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega of America, Ltd.


SEGA
CORE DESIGN INC.
BC RACERS
32X
GENESIS
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.
FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA™ GENESIS 32X™ SYSTEM.
T-7901B
CHUCK + JUNIOR
ACCEL 9
SPEED 7
ENERGY 4
ATTACK 5
SELECT
PRESS START TO CHOOSE



BC Racers -

BC Racers is a classic spin-off of the Chuck Rock series of platform games. When you realize that the protagonists (Chuck Rock and his son) have been traded for the stereotype of saving the "pretty slim blonde" with a "badboy pumped with glasses," hip appearance, you discover that the Core Design were trying to sell the game by its cover. This normally ends up as a disaster, but the result with BC Racers may not be so bad as one would think. Joining Chuck and son in this outing are other pairs of early humans inspired by modern musicians, with names like Brick Jagger, Bob Hardly, Jimi Handtrix, Granite Jackstone, and Sid Viscous. This seems to imply that the game places a firm emphasis on its musical elements, but you couldn't be more wrong.

As with any racing game, the stats vary for each couple, theoretically providing you with an assortment of personalities who possess distinct playing styles, advantages, and weaknesses. This makes for a nice variation of the Mario Kart style racers that didn't appear the 32X, although Street Racer comes to mind. The tracks increase in size and completely change layout, even gaining shortcuts, which can bring good weeks of playing. BC Racers should get some attention as it is the best Mario Kart clone you can play on the 32X. ■

BC RACERS MENU
RACE DIFFICULTY
EASY
OPTIONS
START
CORE
DESIGN LIMITED

Title:
BC Racers

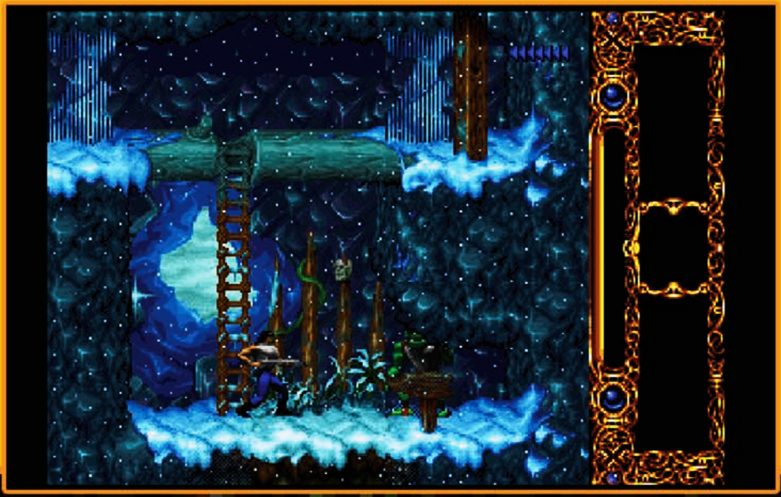
Genre:
A Stone Age Go-Kart Racer

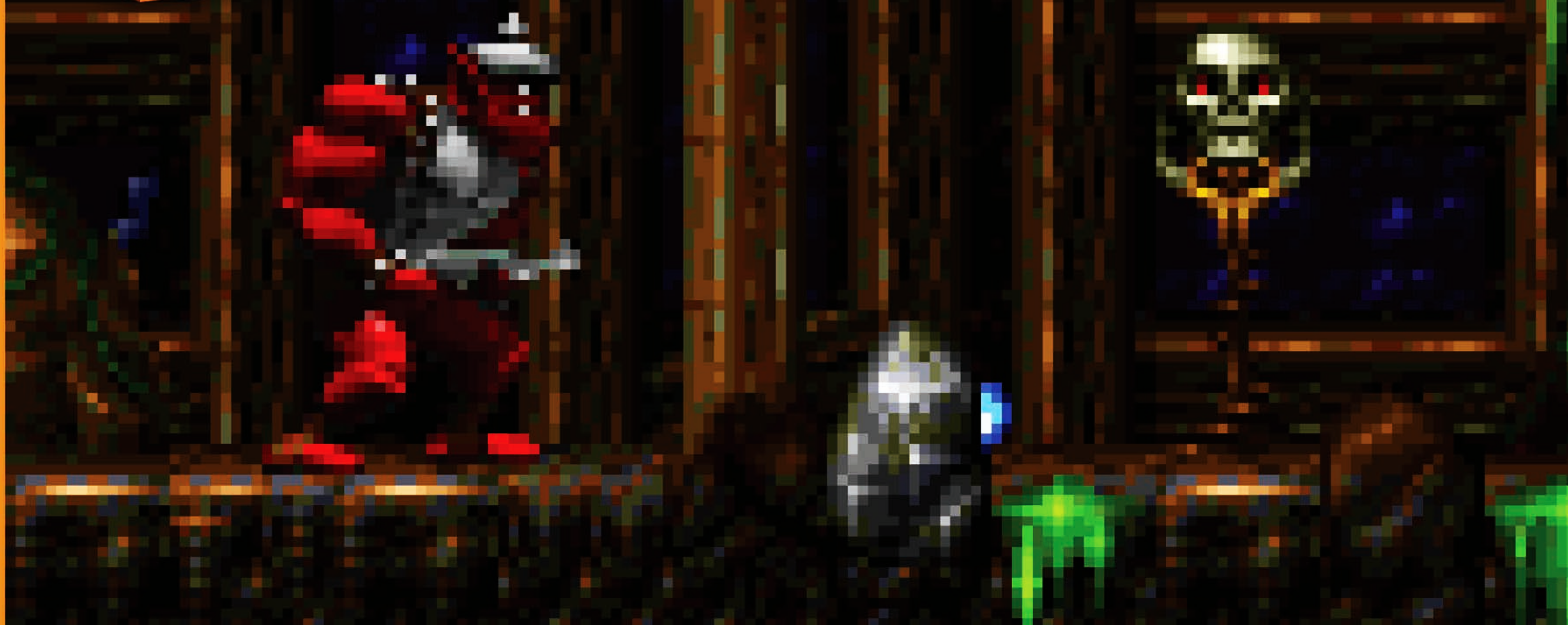
Developer:
Core Design

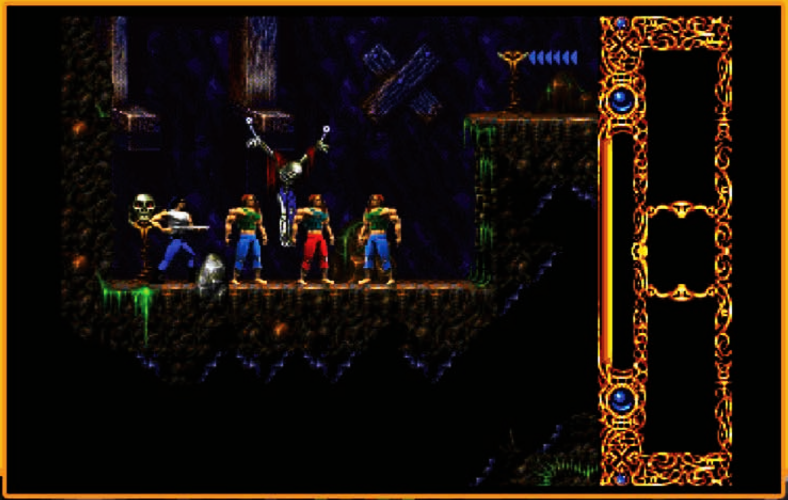
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Front Street Publishing (U.S. Gold)

SEGA
SEGA
32X
GENESIS
BLACKTHORNE
BLACKTHORNE
GENESIS
32X
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
TEEN
T
AGES 13+
84519
84519





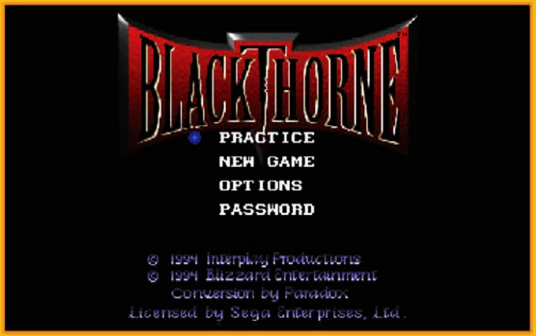


SEGA 32X

Black Thorne -

Welcome to the world of Tuul. Once a peaceful world, Tuul is a world in pain and chaos. When Thoros, the last King of Tuul died, his body was transformed into two stones of power: the Lightstone and the Darkstone. The stones were inherited by his twin sons who divided Tuul into Androth and Ka'dra'suul. Androth revered the Lightstone and prospered. Ka'dra'suul buried the Darkstone and was drained of its resources while its people were transformed into hideous creatures. Jealous of the Androthi, Ka'dra'suul invaded Androth and enslaved its people turning the Xandralite mines into prisons.

Blackthorne is an adventure platformer that can only be described as a gem for the 32X. The game is best enjoyed using the 6-Button controller, though it can certainly be played with the standard controller. The visuals of Blackthorne are detailed and colourful and the characters are well animated. The Ka'dra'suul creatures look amazing and they certainly have character. They laugh at you and goad you as you travel through the mines in order to rescue prisoners. Your main weapon is a shotgun (that you can use or holster) but there are special weapons that can be found and used such as mines. A password feature lets you start where you left off. If you have a 32X, you must have this game. If you don't have a 32X for your Genesis/MD, get one so you can play this game. ■



BLACKTHORNE

● PRACTICE

NEW GAME

OPTIONS

PASSWORD

© 1994 Interplay Productions
© 1994 Blizzard Entertainment
Conversion by Paradox
Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd.

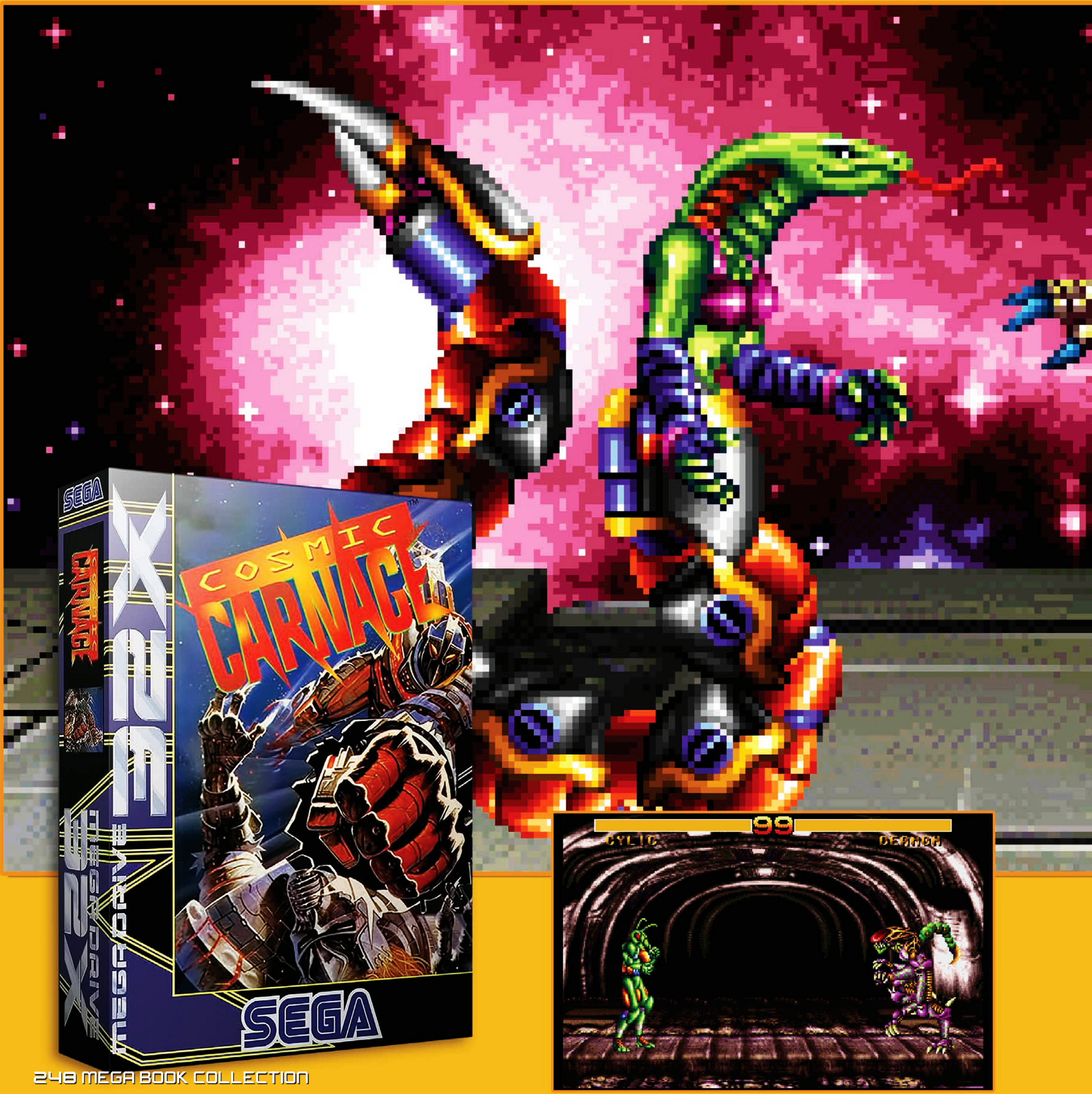
Title:
Black Thorne

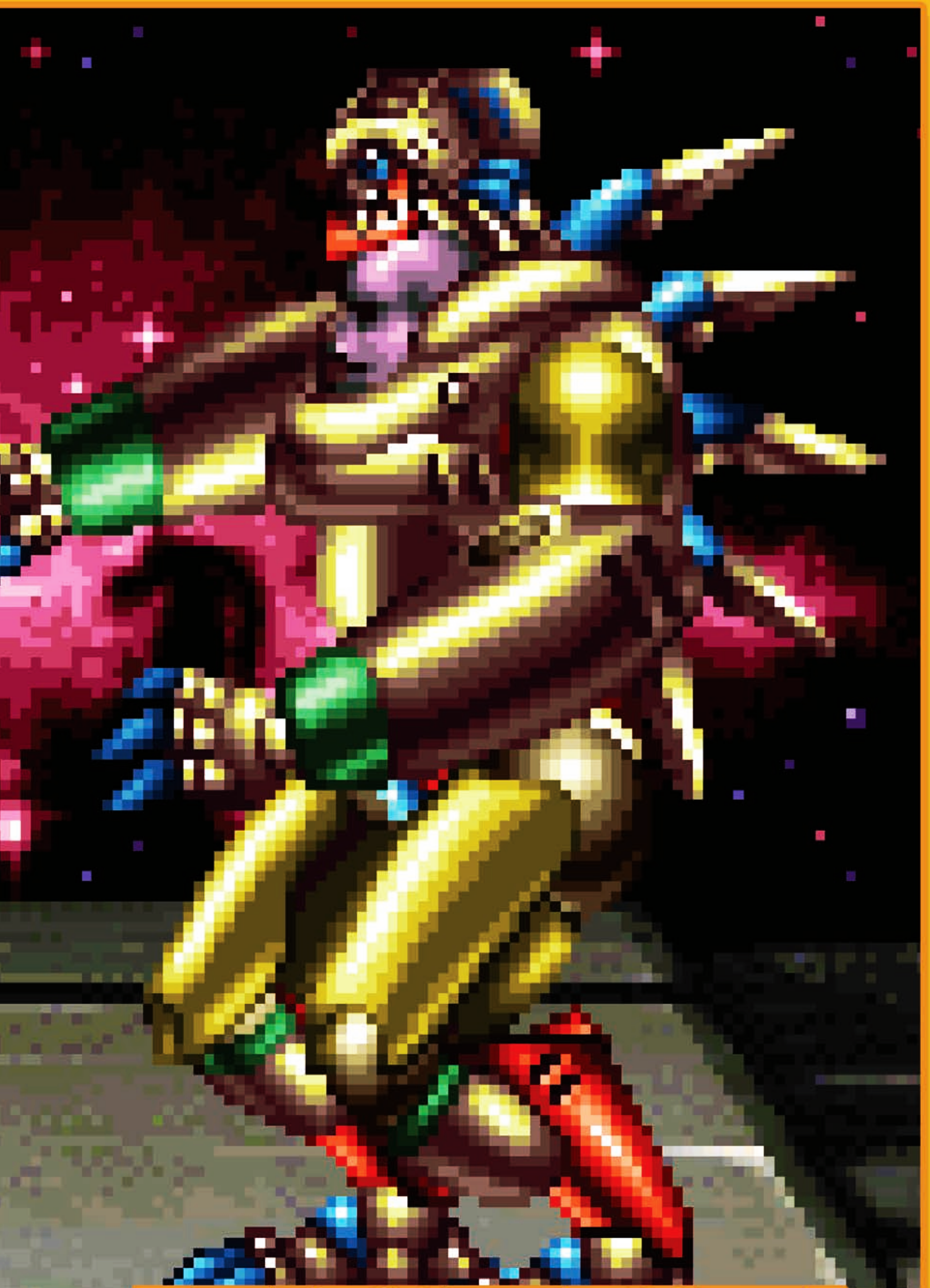
Genre:
Action Gun'n'Run Adventure Game

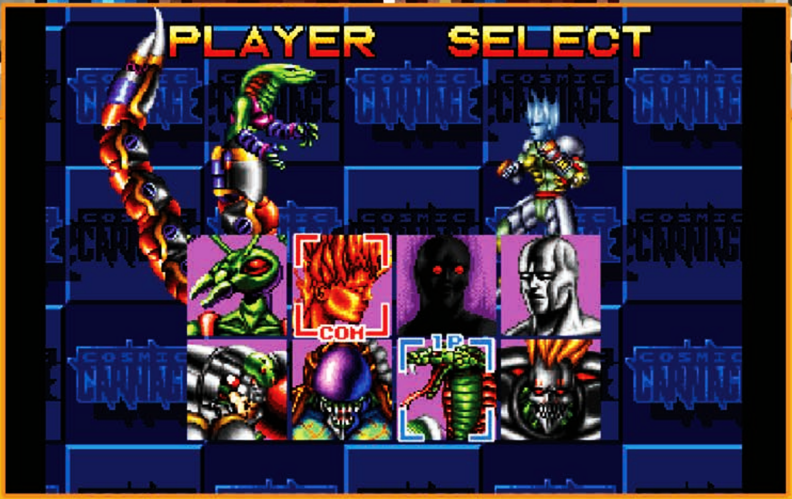
Developer:
Blizzard Entertainment

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Interplay


SEGA
COSMIC CARNAGE
CARNAGE
32X
MEGADRIVE 32X
SEGA
99
CYLIC
DEAMON





Cosmic Carnage -

This was always going to be a controversial game to include in this book and one many will ask; why is this here? I felt this needed to be included on its technical merits and presentation and although seen to be a very weak element in the 32X catalogue, I decided to give it some love. Cosmic Carnage is an original fighter for the SEGA 32X, designed to take advantage of the extra power provided to the Mega Drive by this add-on. The cast of alien convicts is perhaps the most interesting thing about the entire production. You have a colourful motley crew that includes a space samurai, an alien gorilla-bot, a mantis, and a half-woman/half-robo-snake that will likely remind you of Golobulus from G.I. Joe: The Movie. Before each round, you can make slight adjustments to your fighter by adding armour, but the more you add, the slower your warrior. It's actually kind of cool to have customization in a fighter.

Cosmic Carnage may be a 32X exclusive, but it does very little to take advantage of the power of the add-on which was a crying shame. There are worse fighting games out there than Cosmic Carnage, but without it being a part of the 32X collection you would have missed a contributing factor to what was being attempted with the add-on at the time. This ultimately led to the dysfunctional use of the add-on but is relevant as a part of the 32X history none the less.

COSMIC CARNAGE TM
© SEGA ENTERPRISES,LTD. 1994

Title:
Cosmic Carnage

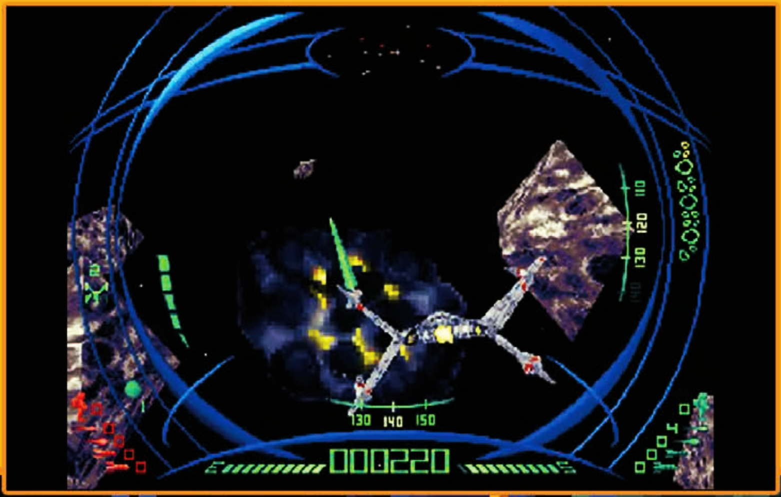
Genre:
An Intergalactic 1 vs.1 Fighter

Developer:
Givro / ALU

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
DARXIDE
32X
MEGADRIVE
DARXIDE
SEGA


130 140 150
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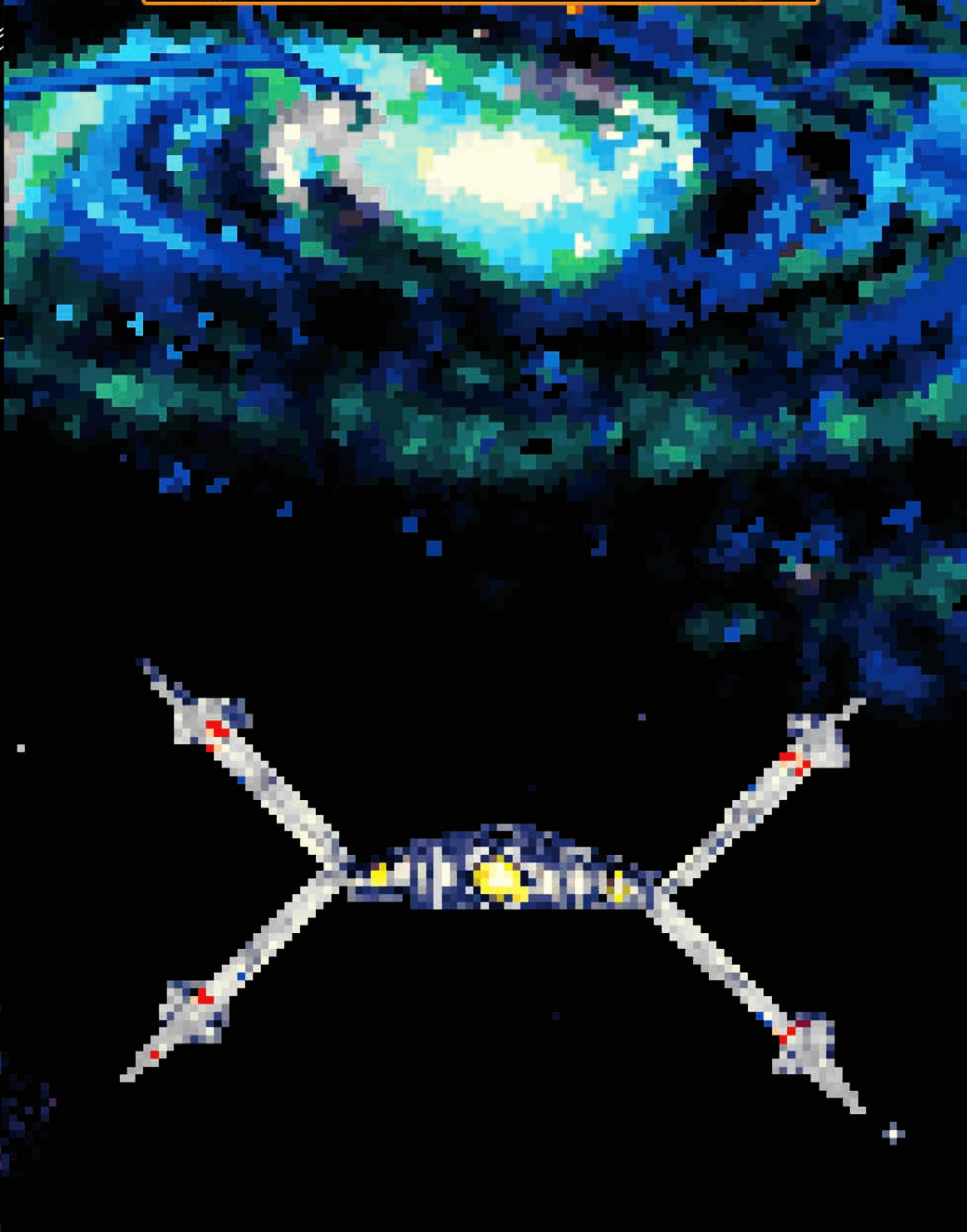
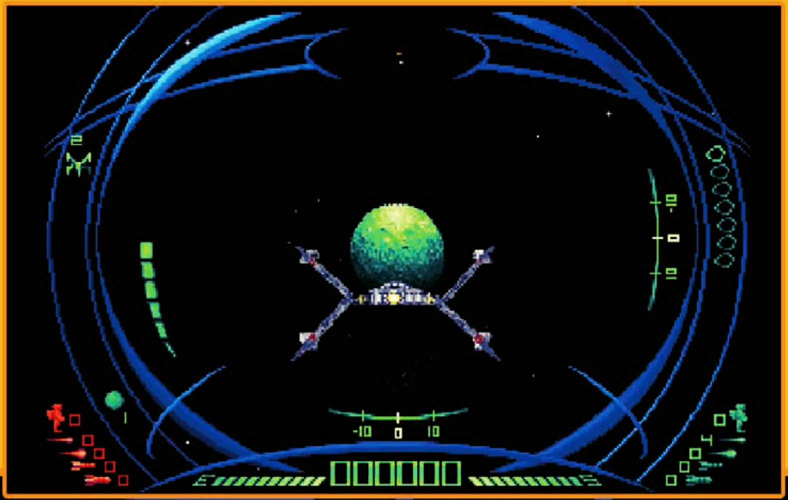




DarXide -

Released only in Europe, Darxide is a shoot-em-up consisting of ten levels, each featuring a four-minute time limit. Your mission is to stop the alien attack force from destroying the Darxide star system. Buttons A and C control your throttle, B fires your laser, and Z launches a bomb (from Level 5 onwards) on your six button controller. The first thing to note is the excellent texture mapping and shadow effects that could easily be mistaken for an early PlayStation One title! Shooting down large boulders that break off into smaller pieces resembles that of Asteroids, some missions have a hint of Defender where you are tasked with saving miners and was great fun multitasking and taking the decision to either destroy a firing alien craft, hunt down stray boulders, or save a suffocating miner, something which is strategically enjoyable.

Darxide shows all the makings of a second-generation Sega 32X title but wasn't without its flaws. The strict time limit is the main offender and without real difficulty options you're left to slog through the same levels over and over, but in saying all of that this was a great showpiece for what the 32X was capable of, and fans of this style of game will find themselves at home here. This is one most definitely worth having in your Sega 32X collection. The game was also good enough to have a reworked version, called Darxide EMP, for Pocket PC and Nokia Series 60 phones back in 2003. ■

COPYRIGHT © FRONTIER DEVELOPMENTS LTD 1995
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD
MUSIC COPYRIGHT © 1995 SEGA

Title:
DarXide

Genre:
Awesome 3D Polygon Shoot'em Up

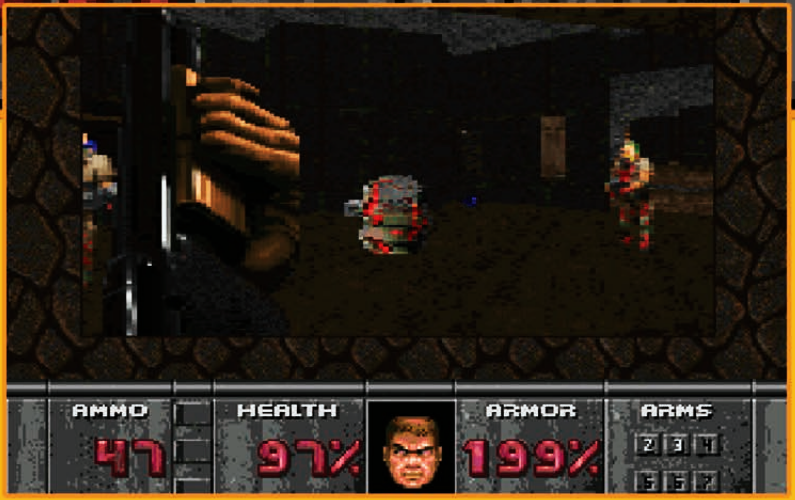
Developer:
Frontier Developments

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega

DOOM
SEGA
id SOFTWARE
32X
MEGADRIVE
HEALTH
100%
ARI

RMOR
0%
ARMS
2 3 4



Doom -

Back in the '90s if you were a console gamer you always had at least one: the PC gamer friend. You wouldn't get how they could play a game with a keyboard and they would always harp on about one game that was better than anything else you suggested: Doom. It would drive you up the wall as their answer to everything. Today it is hard to comprehend how FPS games were really seen as an exclusive product to the PC.

Sega was one of the first to say 'hold my beer' and in 1994 Doom came to the 32X. Now the graphics may not have been as sharp and it may have had a weird box frame to the first-person display screen, but as soon as that tune hit with the whoosh of the first door opening, console gamers were on a level playing field with their PC pals. Reviewers and gamers alike loved it as it demonstrated the true potential of the 32X and also, you know, it was Doom. It handled well with a controller and was a fast-paced violent ride that demonstrated that this genre need not stay in the confines of the PC realm.

DOOM
TM
id
SOFTWARE
id SOFTWARE, ©1994

Title:
Doom

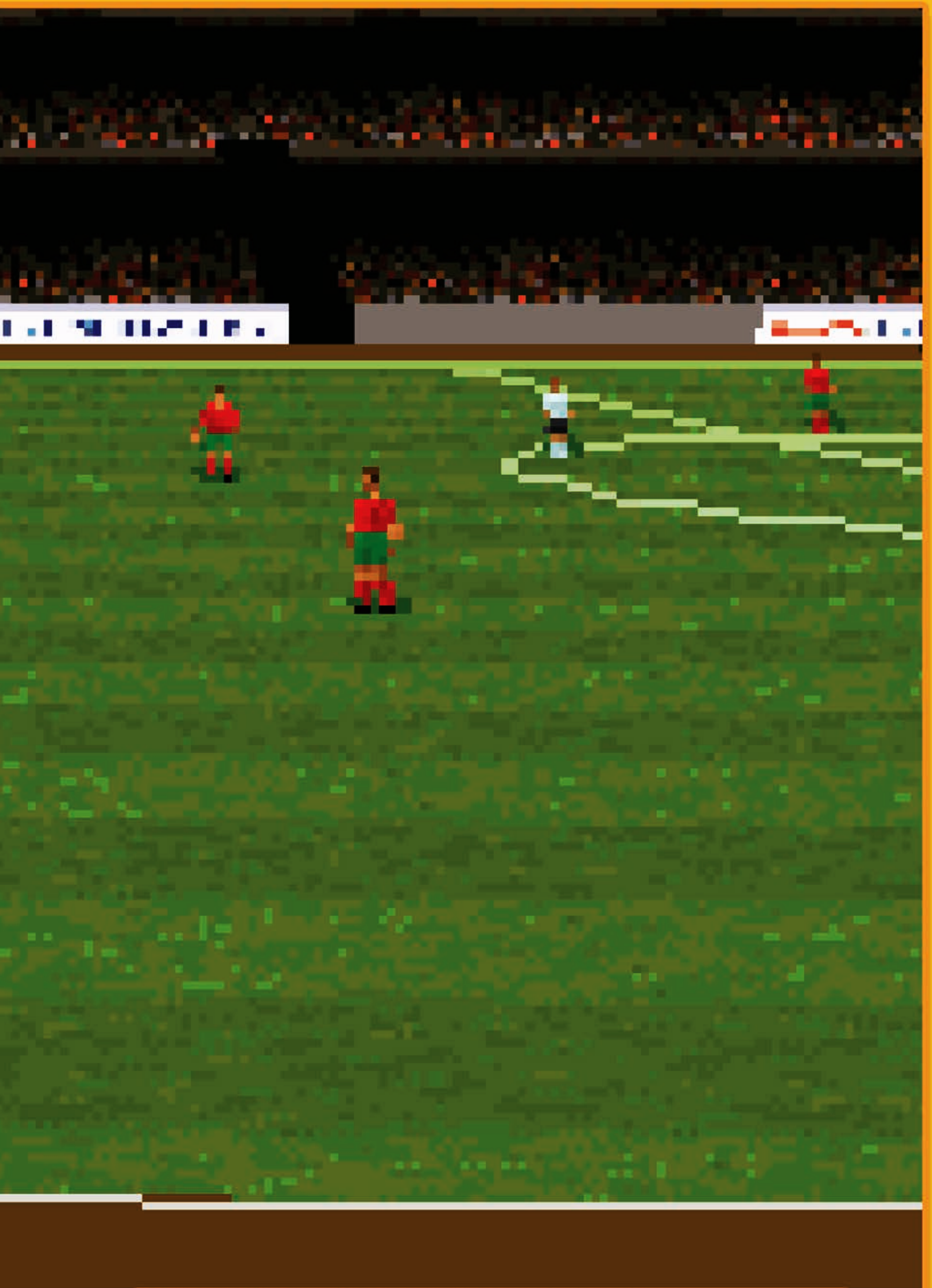
Genre:
First Person Interplanetary Bloodbath

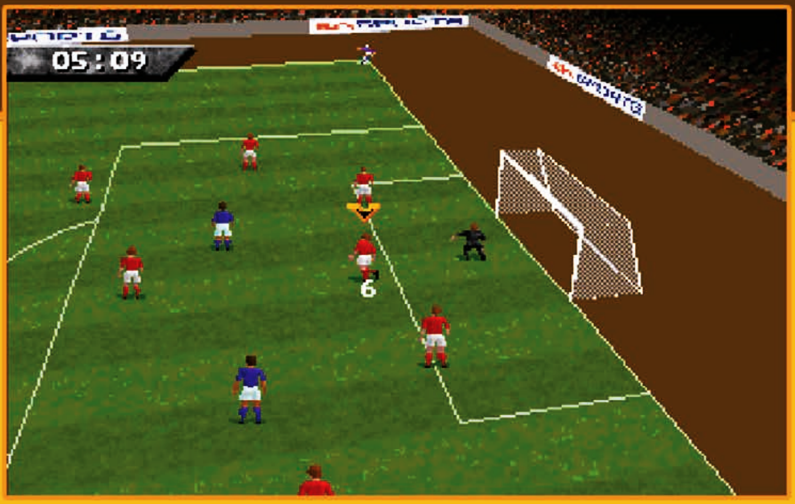
Developer:
id Software

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
id Software

5
FIFA
FIFA 96 SOCCER
EA SPORTS ELECTRONIC ARTS
SEGA
32X MEGADRIVE
00:00
KICK OFF
Brazil 0 - 0 Italy

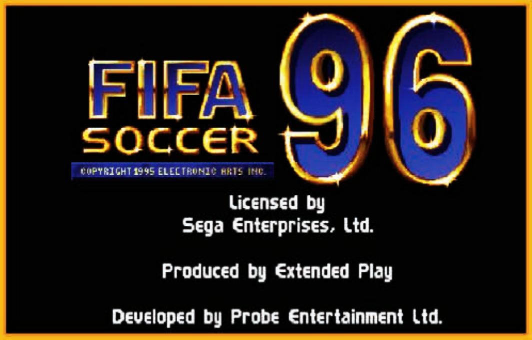




FIFA Soccer 96 -

Next generation soccer is here! Well, not exactly. This was the press release of features of FIFA '96 including: Silicon Graphics modelled players utilizing motion design animation technology; new moves including 1-2 passing, fast dribble, volleys, dummies, fakes, and nutmegs; over 3,500 real players with accurate strengths and weaknesses; transfer real and custom players to create your dream team; and 12 international leagues including English, Scottish, Italian, German and French. It could be argued that no game sums up the sorrowful saga that was the ill-fated 32X as well as FIFA '96 does. Both game and console were sandwiched mercilessly between two generations that were each effortlessly more relevant.

Brave decisions and ambition can only get you so far: any lingering admiration we may all register towards Probe Software's efforts to strive for more than base obligation are mercilessly crushed beneath the heavy tread of the reality of expectation of a great football title, supposedly taking the advantage of the 32X hardware, only to discover that wasn't the case with FIFA '96. It's a little heart breaking in a way, because this was not the best of FIFA games to play and like Cosmic Carnage has a big failing in its game play which should have been massively successful to all football fans. This is included here out of a sense of completeness of the system's history. ■


FIFA SOCCER 96
COPYRIGHT 1995 ELECTRONIC ARTS INC.
Licensed by
Sega Enterprises, Ltd.
Produced by Extended Play
Developed by Probe Entertainment Ltd.

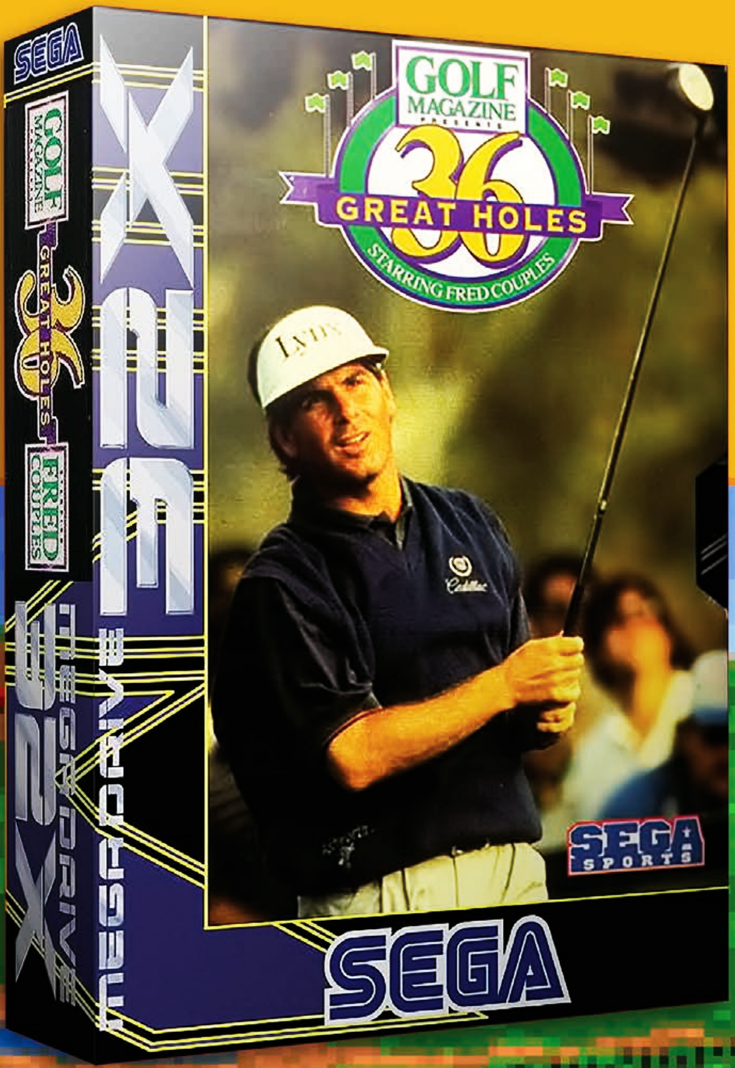
Title:
FIFA Soccer 96

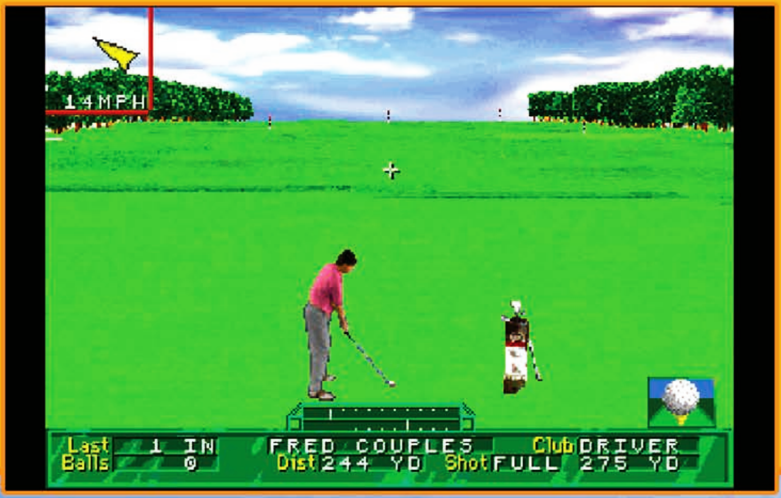
Genre:
Football Sports Simulator

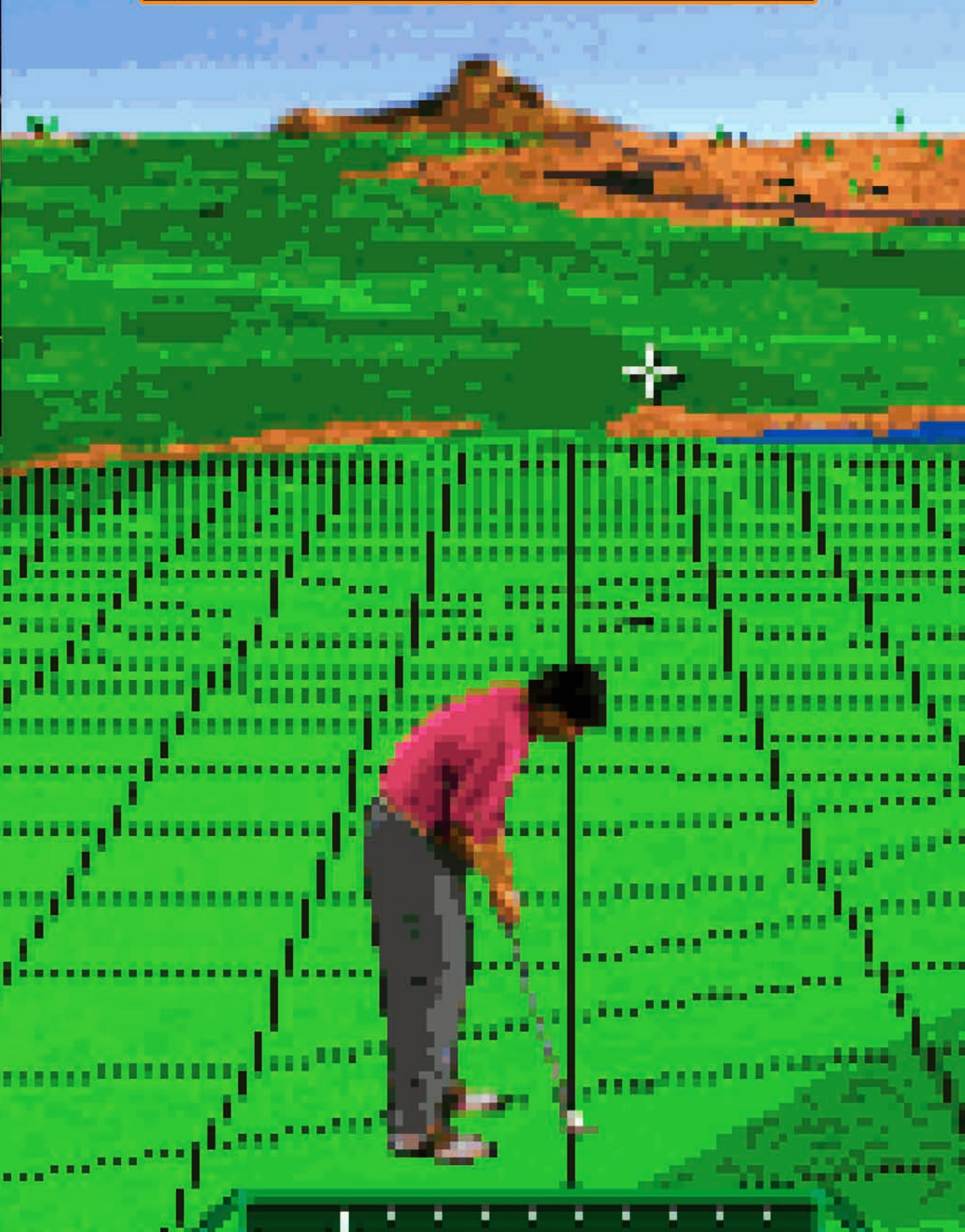
Developer:
Probe Software

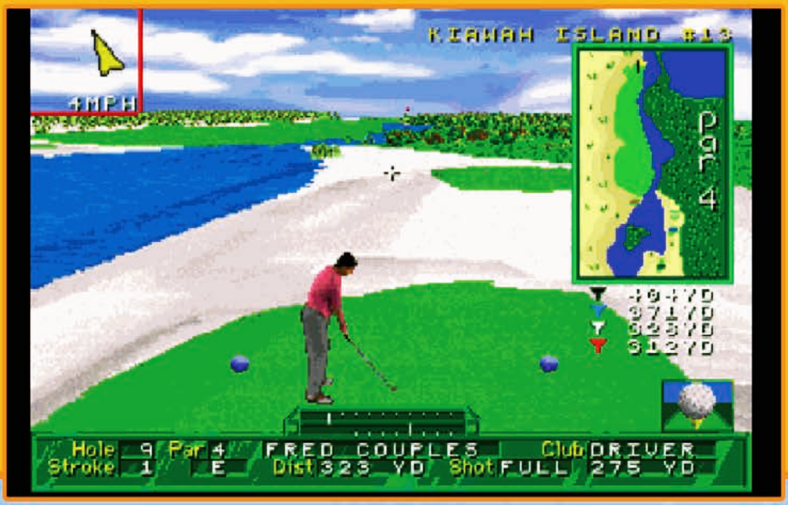
Year Released:
1995

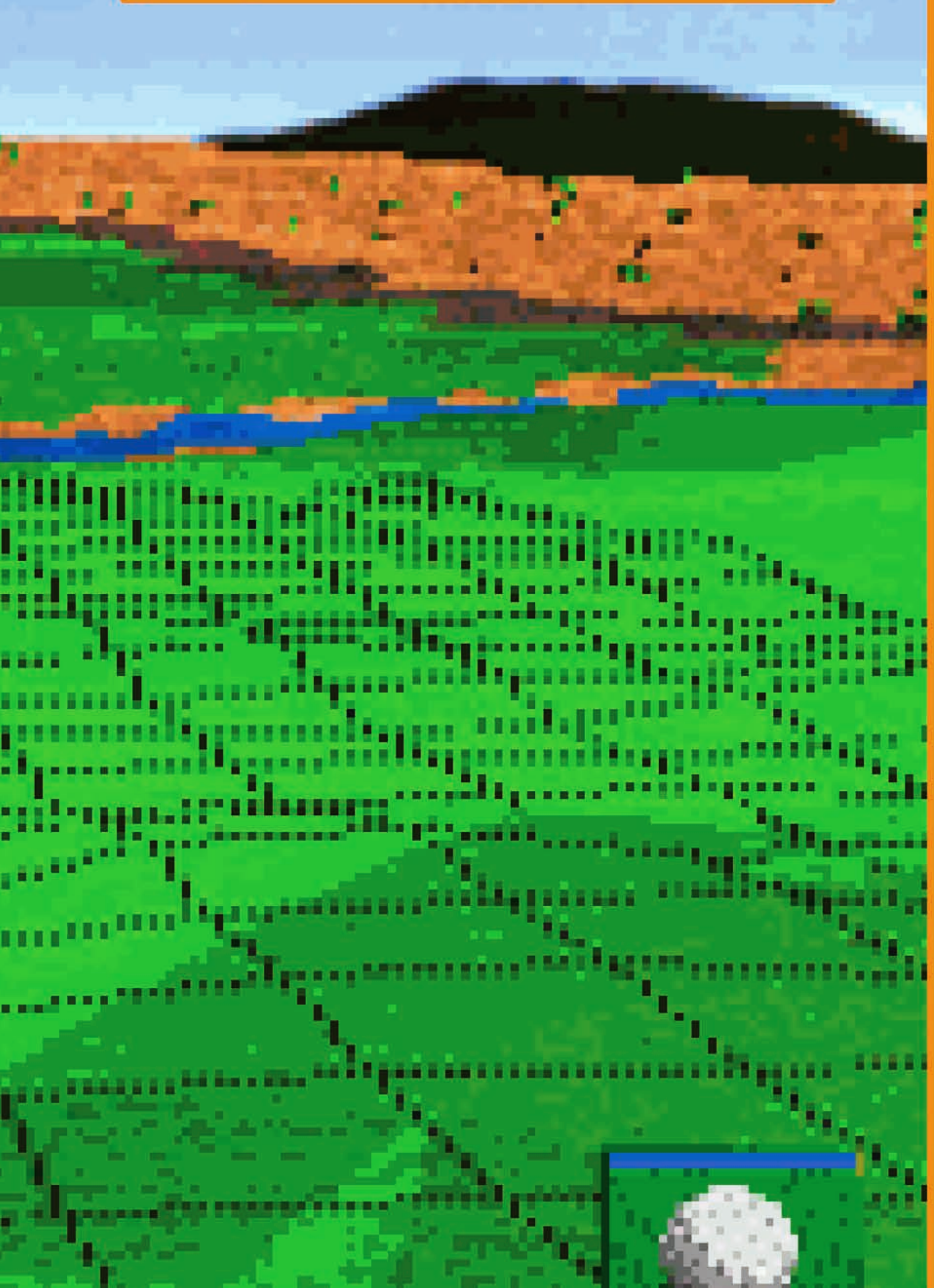
Publisher:
Electronic Arts


SEGA
GOLF MAGAZINE PRESENTS
36 GREAT HOLES
STARRING FRED COUPLES
32X
MEGADRIVE
SEGA SPORTS
SEGA


14MPH
Last 1 IN
Balls 0
FRED COUPLES
Dist 244 YD
Club DRIVER
Shot FULL 275 YD



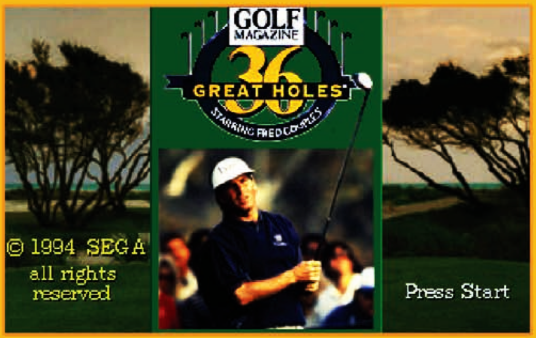

KIAWAH ISLAND #13
4MPH
par 4
Hole 9 Par 4
Stroke 1 E
FRED COUPLES
Dist 323 YD
Club DRIVER
Shot FULL 275 YD



Golf Magazine: 36 Great Holes –

The Golf Magazine 32X title was a selection of 36 U.S. course holes digitized for spectacular detail and allowing you to pay as Fred Couples himself or take him on in a round of golf. The 32X technology brought you a great variety within the game: total shot control; ultra-realistic gameplay; seven ways to play including Tournament, Skins Game and Scramble; thousands of course combinations and a battery back-up to save your vital stats. It was essentially a golfer's wet dream of a video game. It's one of the best 32X games in the library and a game any sports fan should readily try.

The only caveat was the steep learning curve that almost all of them have, especially if you don't have a manual by your side during play. Sega made this about as simple to learn as it can get. The programmers followed a common contemporary control layout that is very similar to Electronic Arts PGA series but with exceptional polish and refinement making Golf Magazine: 36 Great Holes a solid attempt at using the capabilities of the 32X hardware. The visuals are definitely an improvement over what the Mega Drive could do, everything has a higher resolution and just looks nicer. Hills and sand traps have height to them here and look more realistic all adding to the appeal of this great game. Fred gives a nice vocalized intro to the game when you first start and he sounds crystal clear. ■


GOLF MAGAZINE
36
GREAT HOLES
STARRING FRED COUPLES
© 1994 SEGA
all rights
reserved
Press Start

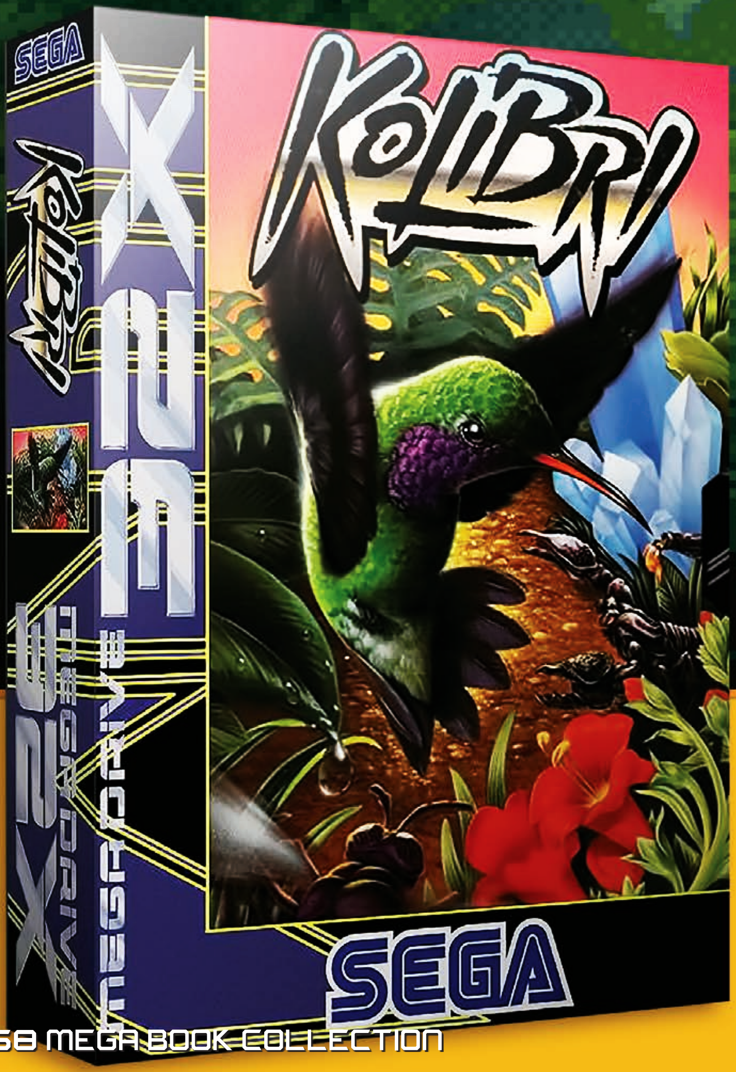
Title:
Golf Magazine: 36 Great Holes Starring Fred Couples

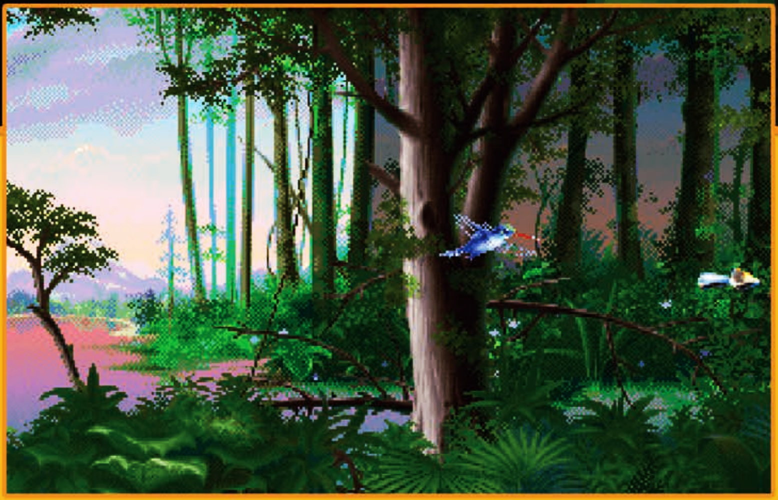
Genre:
Classic Golfing Simulator

Developer:
Flashpoint Productions

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
KOLIBRI
32X
MEGADRIVE
SEGA



Kolibri -

The story of Kolibri finds Earth damaged by a dark crystal. You see, twin crystals were flung into space when their planet of origin exploded. The light crystal made it to Earth first, burying itself deep into the planet, and helped nature evolve into a beautiful world. Unfortunately, the dark crystal has found its way to Earth and, upon crashing on the planet, has changed the beauty of the planet into a cancerous disease. The light crystal has felt the effects of its evil twin on the planet and it has infused Kolibri, the hummingbird, with its power so it can act as an antibody capable of combatting the evil that affects the world. Kolibri must fly through different parts of the world eliminating dangerous insects, collecting rings, and bursting bubbles with power ups.

The bubbles come from destroyed enemies and the rings can be used as shields (they can only take one hit). Kolibri has beautiful and nicely coloured graphics but the gameplay can be confusing. It's hard to tell what kind of weapon you'll find in the bubbles and, even if you get these special weapons, they don't appear to be very powerful. The screen lacks any score, life energy, or weapon select indicators which is not helpful. Sadly, despite the beautiful graphics, this is not a strong title for the system. ■

Kolibri
™
(C) 1995 SEGA

Title:
Kolibri

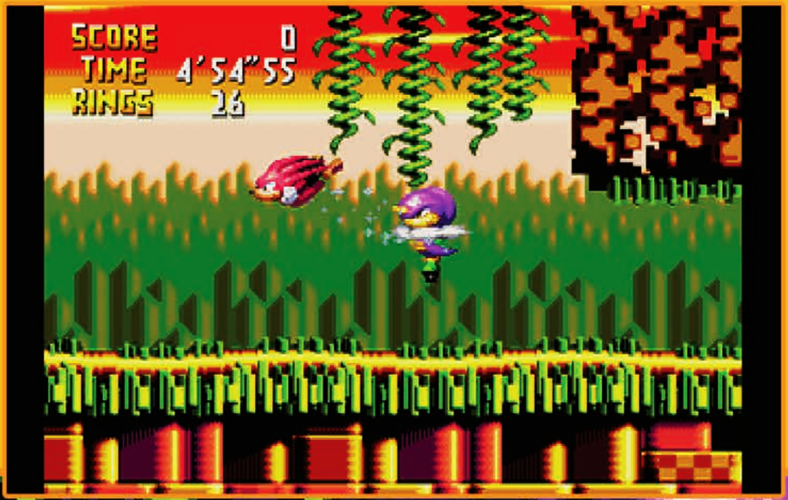
Genre:
Hummingbird Side Scrolling Shoot'em Up

Developer:
Novotrade

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
SEGA

SEGA
KNUCKLES' CHAOTIX
32X
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA
SCORE 0
TIME 0'15"61
RINGS 8
100
51



Knuckles' Chaotix -

Exclusive to the Sega 32X, Knuckles' Chaotix is an innovative title for the system. The game features five worlds (each containing five acts) covering 25 levels to play through. Your mission is to try and stop Dr Robotnik from ruining the opening of Carnival Island's amusement park. The game play mechanics are unusual here and involve two characters being permanently connected to each other by a rubber band, which forces them to work together in order to progress through each level: you can either pick up your partner and throw them or hold them in one position while you stretch out for a slingshot effect that zooms you both up ramps.

As long as you aren't assuming or expecting a typical Sonic the Hedgehog experience in gameplay, you'll find that there's a fun and unique platforming experience here. The controls take a while to get used to but it's thrilling when you manage to string together a series of complicated moves to reach higher platforms! The level design has many clever moments, such as in Botanic Base where both characters need to stand on separate platforms to open locked doors. The platforming can be a little uninspired at times, but the puzzle-like element of solving navigational problems to progress through levels is a fantastic idea making Knuckles' Chaotix very different from other titles of the genre. Those who give it a chance will discover a worthy spin-off with high amounts of re-playability.

CHAOTIX™
FEATURING KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA
WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL
IN 32X WORLD
PUSH START
©SEGA ENTERPRISES,LTD.1995

Title:
Knuckles' Chaotix

Genre:
A Vibrant Action Platform Title

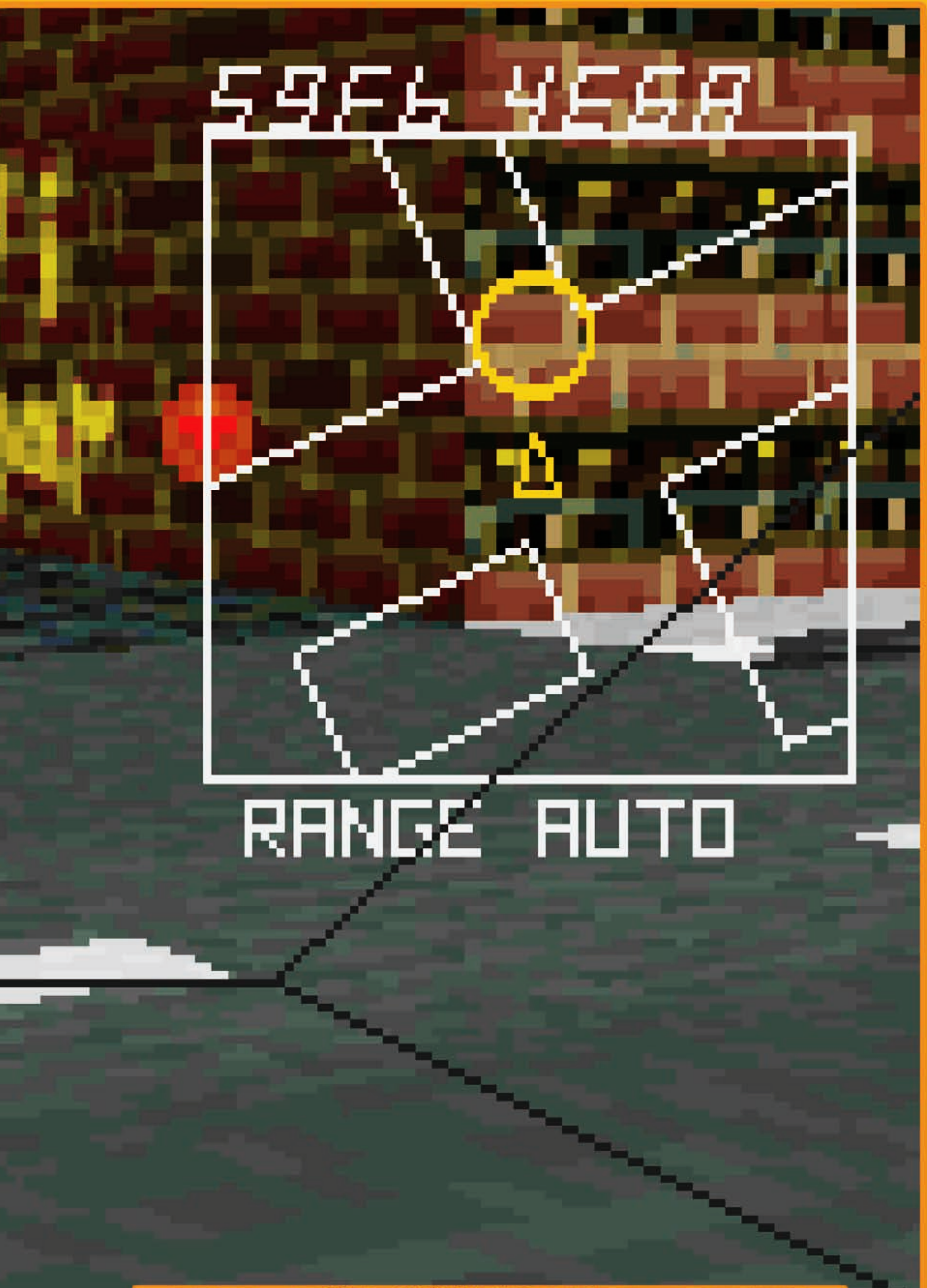
Developer:
Sega AM7 (CS2)

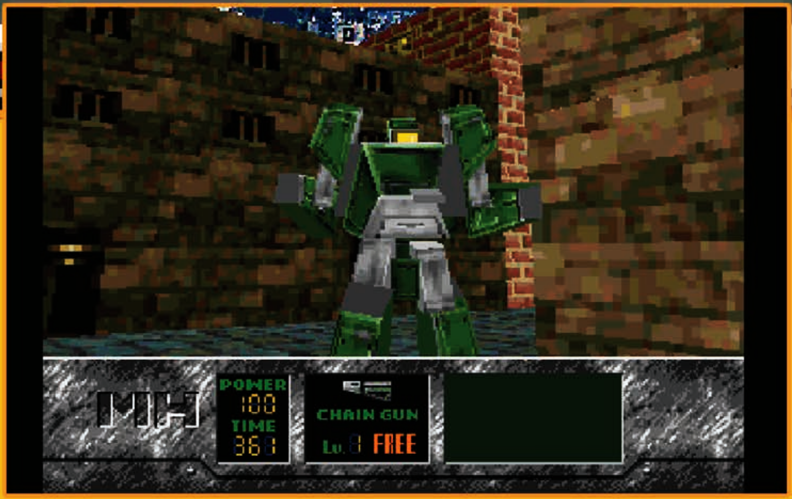
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
METAL HEAD
32X
MEGA DRIVE
METAL HEAD
32X
SEGA

YEAR 4328
RANGE AUTO
MH
POWER
50
TIME
841
CHAIN GUN
Lv.3 FREE
MISSION
START





Metal Head -

The 32X games library seems to be a forgotten system with a limited library, including a collection of awful full-motion video games from Digital Pictures. This 32X exclusive was massively ambitious, a full-on 3D gaming experience to the player. Metal Head is a mission-based mech shooter that secretly wants to be a first-person shooter. These mechs, or 'Metal Heads,' were developed by the world government to put a stop to numerous civil conflicts that threatened to blossom into a new world war and represented a sufficient threat to keep everyone in line. You spend most of your time inside your giant robot performing various missions for the military forces you belong to and assigned to carry out.

While the game isn't without its own issues, what's most surprising is how well it all still manages to hold up despite visual and draw distance issues. But I think that's what you can expect from antiquated titles from this time. That sense of clumsiness seems to be a symptom of the mech genre, rather than unique to Metal Head, and alleviated by using the six-button pad instead of the standard three. Trying to control your robot with just the three buttons quickly becomes a nightmare, since you have to hit keys and directions simultaneously to trigger pedestrian actions such as run or strafe. Metal Head is a unique and excellent gaming experience on the 32X, and you should try it out. ■

MH TM
METAL HEAD
PRESS START BUTTON
©SEGA ENTERPRISES,LTD. 1995

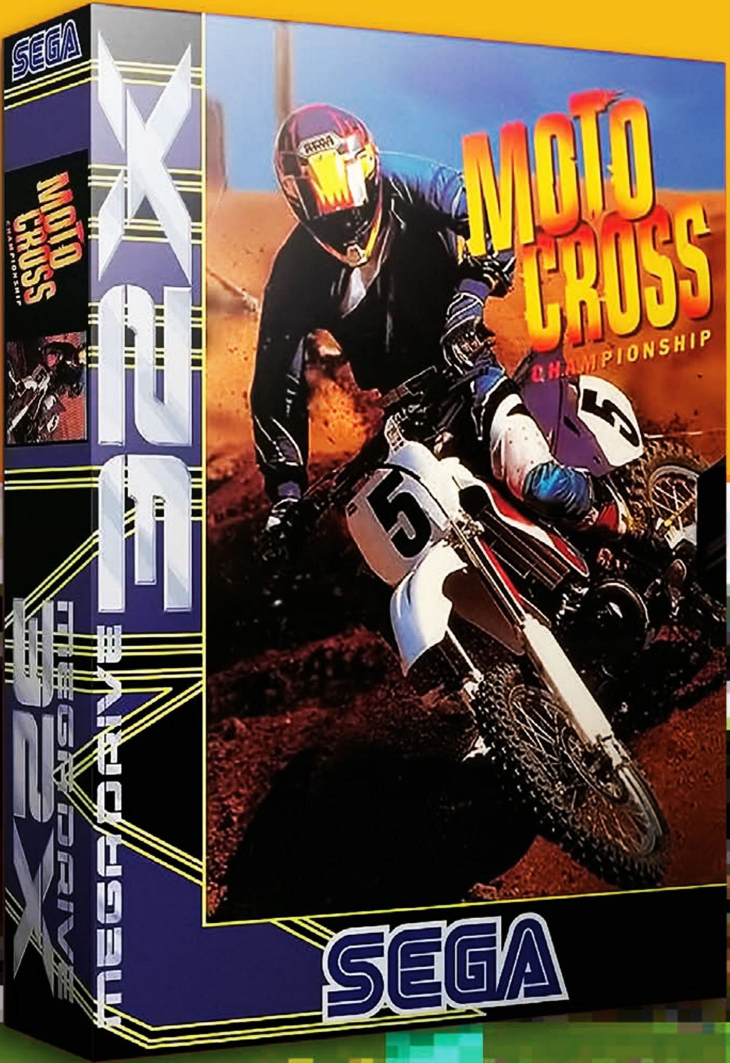
Title:
Metal Head

Genre:
A 3D Polygon Mech Action Title

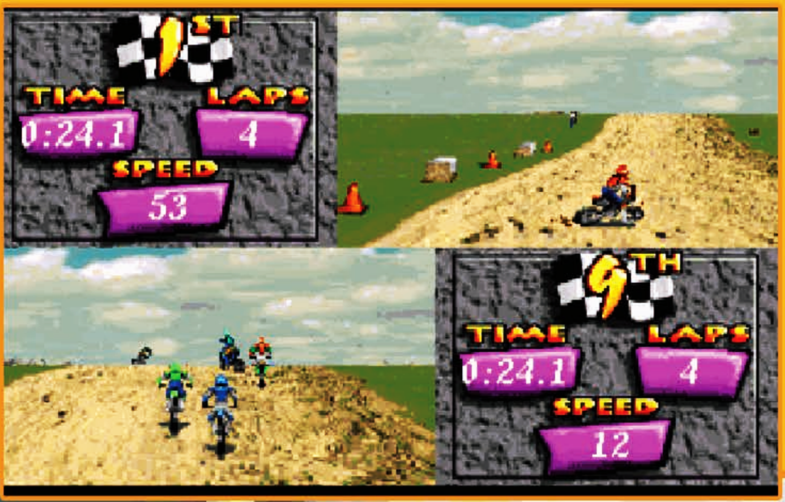
Developer:
SEGA Enterprises Ltd.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
MOTO CROSS
CHAMPIONSHIP
32X
MEGADRIVE
SEGA

8TH
TIME
0:00.1
LAPS
4
SPEED
3



Motocross Championship -

Motocross Championship is the only dirt-bike racing game for the 32X. The action takes place from a behind-the-bike perspective, and makes use of the 32X's hardware bitmap scaling to present a 3D graphical effect. Like the title suggests, the main game mode is a points-based championship. You can compete in one of 3 motorcycle classes over 12 indoor and outdoor tracks. There's also a two-player split-screen mode so you can share off-road fun with a friend. It seems like it wants to be taken seriously as a dirtbike racer: it has three different engine classes ranging from 125cc to Superbike races, which in all honesty provide noticeably different top speeds during races. There are twelve available tracks to race on as mentioned, all providing big jumps, sharp corners, and all manner of things to wipe out on.

Motocross wants you to race them seriously; there's no elastic band progression where you're never too far in front of the pack to cruise to victory, nor too far behind it to rule yourself out of a placement. You win and lose on your own racing merit. The upshot is that if you do manage to get ahead, they will struggle to ever catch you. Racing among them is certainly not recommended. Motocross is far from perfect and with bulky graphics, many frowned upon this title when released and although not the greatest bike game on the 32X it has some fun in there if your prepared to put its failings aside. ■

PRESS START
MOTOCROSS Championship TM
TM ©1994 SEGA ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Title:
Motocross Championship

Genre:
A 3D Polygon Motocross Racer

Developer:
Artech Digital Entertainment, Ltd.

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega

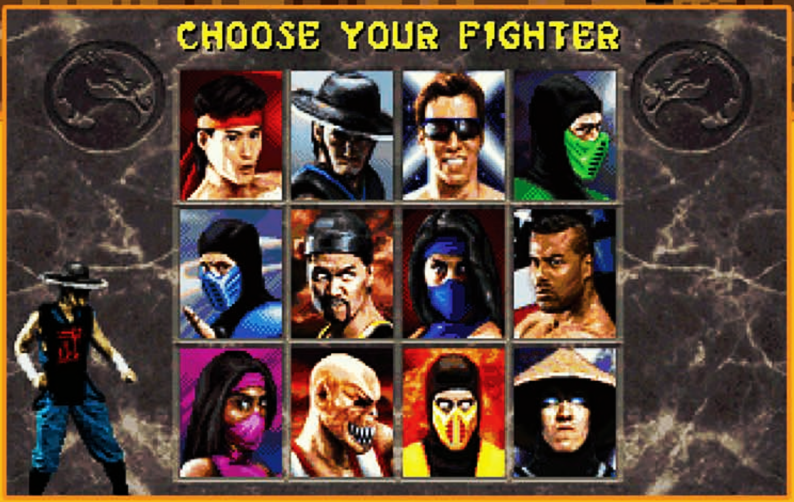
32X
SEGA MEGA DRIVE
MORTAL KOMBAT II
MIDWAY
Acclaim
SCORPION
SCORPION

Mortal Kombat II -

The result of putting Mortal Kombat onto home consoles meant that parents could see exactly what a violent game their kids had been playing at the arcade. Parent groups went onto the news crying out "think of the children" and Midway did exactly that and released the more bloody and violent Mortal Kombat II. Though it was a more polished and improved sequel. The fatalities became even more elaborate and gruesome to the point where even fighters like Lui Kang wasn't very monk-like anymore. Whilst other familiar favourites returned including Sub Zero and Scorpion. It was a pleasure to have Reptile right from the start this time as well. They ditched Sonia and Kano with probably no one missing the latter and made way for new characters such as Mileena and Kung Lao (my favourite).

Oh, and in a sly way, they even acknowledged those concerned parents by including the 'friendship' finisher so those Midway folks couldn't have been all that bad. Though this didn't stop the game from being banned in Germany and heavily censored in Japan, yes that's right a western game was censored in Japan. It also got the snazzy subtitle 'Ultimate Godly Fist', whatever that means. ■

MORTAL KOMBAT II



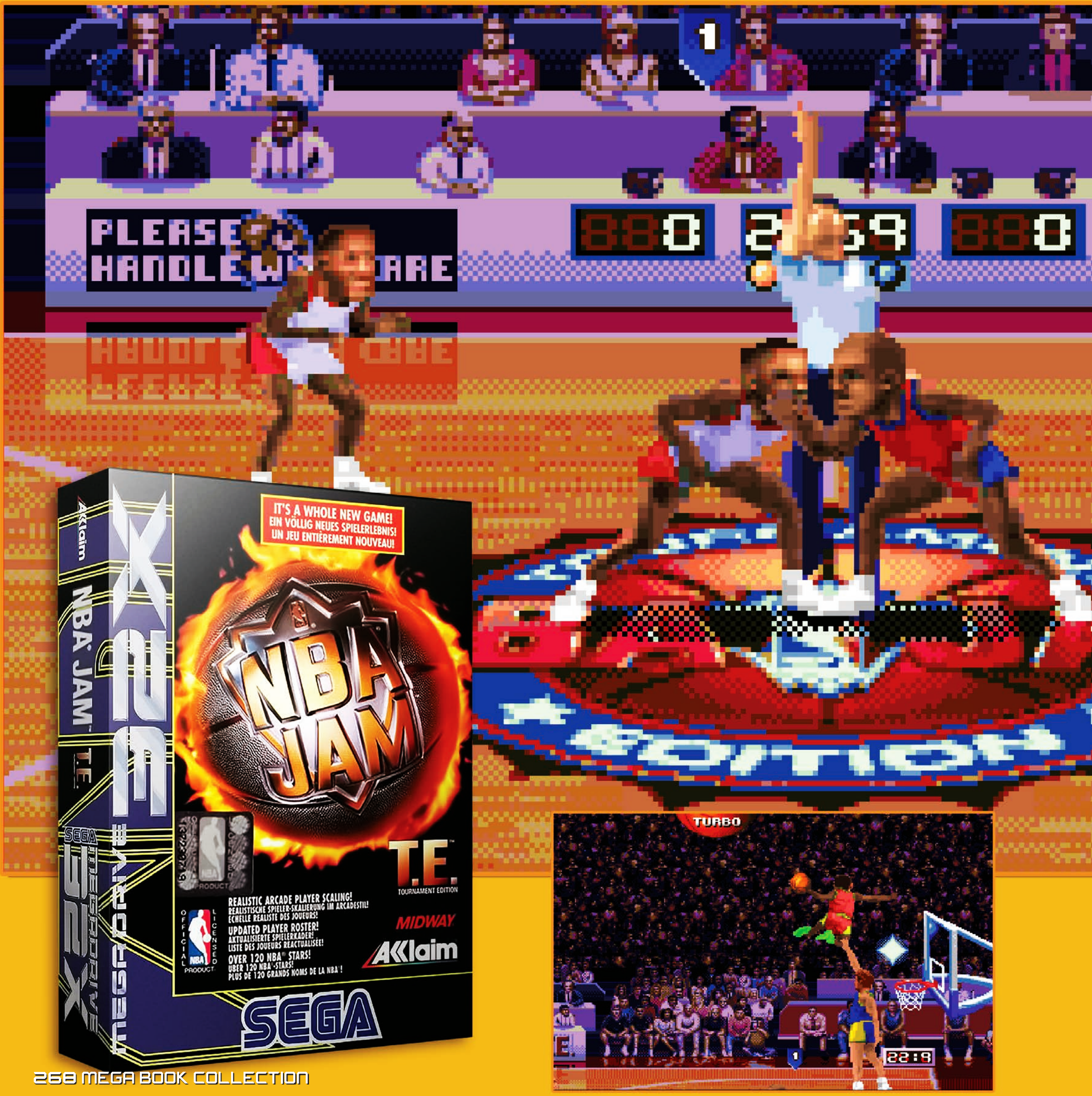
Title:
Mortal Kombat 2

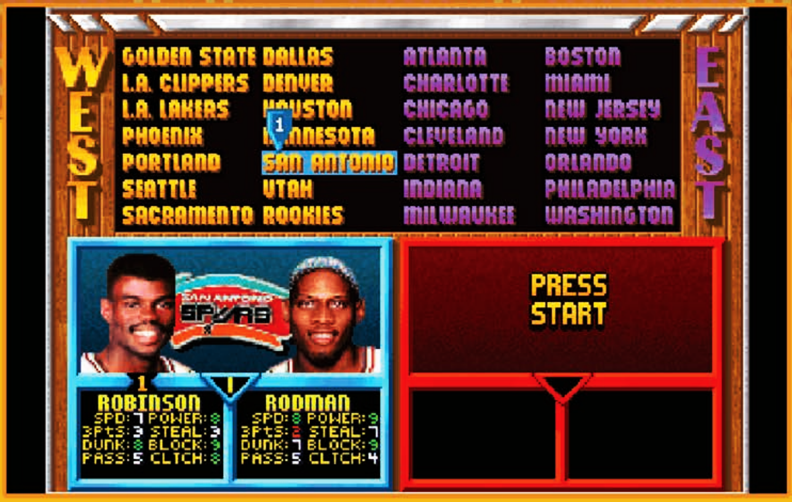
Genre:
Arcade Gorefest Beat'em Up

Developer:
Midway / Probe Entertainment

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Midway / Acclaim Entertainment


IT'S A WHOLE NEW GAME!
EIN VÖLLIG NEUES SPIELERLEBNIS!
UN JEU ENTIÈREMENT NOUVEAU!
NBA JAM
T.E.
TOURNAMENT EDITION
REALISTIC ARCADE PLAYER SCALING!
REALISTISCHE SPIELER-SKALIERUNG IM ARCADESTIL!
ECHELLE REALISTE DES JOUEURS!
UPDATED PLAYER ROSTER!
AKTUALISIERTE SPIELERKADER!
LISTE DES JOUEURS REACTUALISEE!
OVER 120 NBA STARS!
ÜBER 120 NBA-STARS!
PLUS DE 120 GRANDS NOMS DE LA NBA!
MIDWAY
Acclaim
SEGA
32X
MEGADRIVE 32X
PLEASE HANDLE W ARE
TURBO
22:19


WEST
GOLDEN STATE
L.A. CLIPPERS
L.A. LAKERS
PHOENIX
PORTLAND
SEATTLE
SACRAMENTO
DALLAS
DENVER
HOUSTON
MINNESOTA
SAN ANTONIO
UTAH
ROOKIES
ATLANTA
CHARLOTTE
CHICAGO
CLEVELAND
DETROIT
INDIANA
MILWAUKEE
BOSTON
MIAMI
NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK
ORLANDO
PHILADELPHIA
WASHINGTON
EAST
PRESS START
ROBINSON
SPD:7 POWER:8
3PTS:3 STEAL:3
DUNK:8 BLOCK:9
PASS:5 CLTCH:8
RODMAN
SPD:8 POWER:9
3PTS:2 STEAL:7
DUNK:7 BLOCK:9
PASS:5 CLTCH:4

NBA JAM: Tournament Edition -

NBA Jam is one of my favourite sports games of all time and I don't even like basketball! I might not have many nice things to say about its predecessor Arch Rivals but respect is due for laying the foundations for one of the most successful arcade/video games ever made. The two-on-two dynamic works exceptionally well. In the console versions you can choose to take control of one player throughout the matchup or switch between the two. Each team has three players to choose from in this "tournament" update.

I use the speech marks as there's still no knockout or play-off mode available. Beating each team in succession is still pretty fun and serving a boomshakalaka or two never gets dull. Whether you opt for dunk specialists or 3-point masters, or a combination of the two, NBA Jam keeps you on your toes throughout. And you can switch your team after each quarter if you like.

The 32X version is nearer the arcade "big head" game with improved graphics and sound over its 16-bit counterparts. If you had the Mega Drive/Genesis version, would you need the 32X one? Probably not. If you had a 32X but no NBA Jam then you might as well get this one.■

TOURNAMENT EDITION
MIDWAY
NBA JAM
Acclaim
HEAD TO HEAD
TEAM GAME
PRACTICE
OPTIONS

Title:
NBA JAM: Tournament Edition

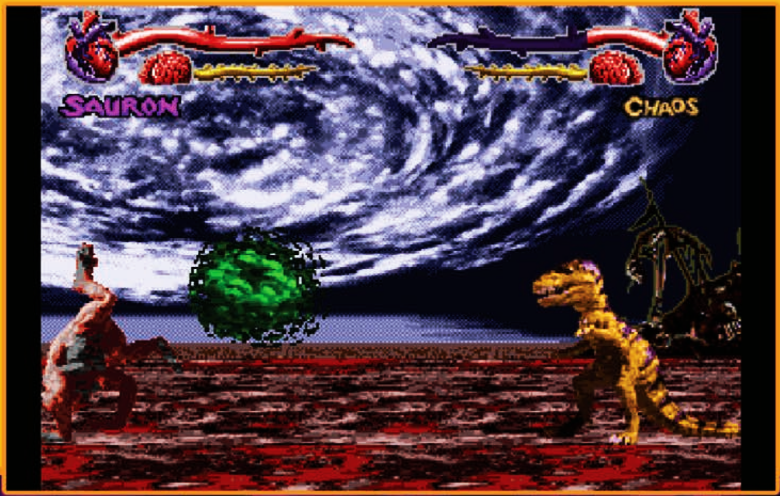
Genre:
Classic Arcade Basket Ball Title

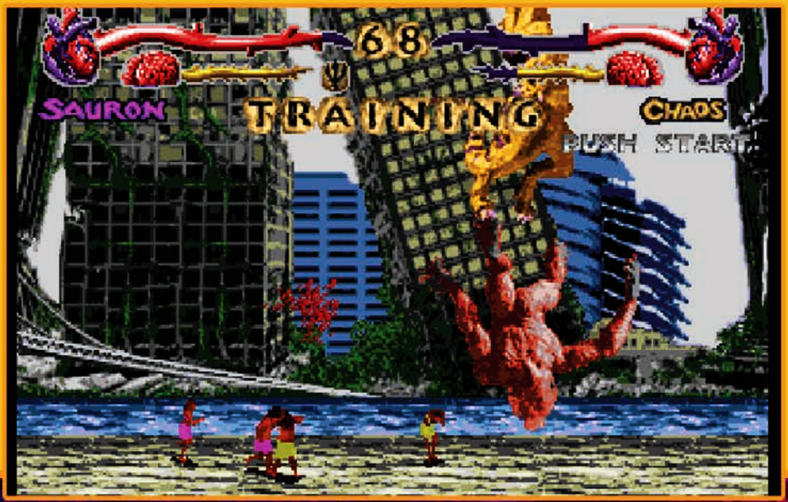
Developer:
Midway

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Acclaim Entertainment

SEGA
PRIMAL RAGE
32X
MEGADRIVE
SEGA


SAURON
CHAOS



Primal Rage -

Sometime in the future Earth has been hit by a meteor and human civilization collapsed. The Earth itself has changed and the continents have once again merged into a large super-continent (shaped like a T-Rex skull) that is covered by a primitive rainforest. In this world humans have regressed and they now refer to their planet as Urth. In this environment, gigantic creatures that look like the ancient dinosaurs but that have intelligence have emerged. In fact, they are divided into what are deemed Virtuous gods and Destructive gods, gods of peace and gods of war. These creatures have formed clans and humans serve in these but life is not at peace as the gods fight for control of Urth.

Primal Rage is a fighting game where the player controls dinosaurs or large simians instead of humans. The player can select from a number of creatures to fight, each with different skills and special moves. This 32X version has more colours and greater detail for the creatures and the backgrounds. The fights have plenty of blood as the creatures hurt each other and things move at a very fast pace. It is funny to see the humans adoring the monsters as they fight each other. This game is best enjoyed using the 6-Button controller and it is best enjoyed with a second player. Overall, this is a good version of the game that fans of the title will enjoy. After all, who doesn't like to see dinosaurs fighting? ■

PRIMAL
RAGE

Title:
Primal Rage

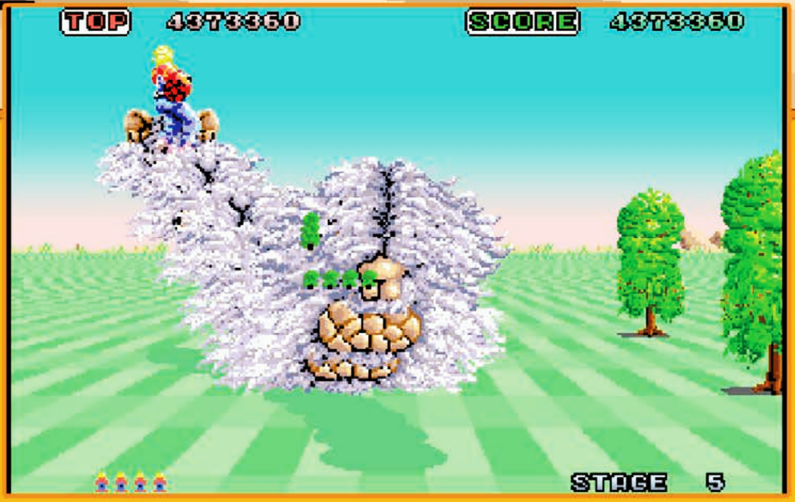
Genre:
Atari's Hit Arcade 1 Vs. 1 Dino Fighter

Developer:
Atari Games

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Time Warner Interactive

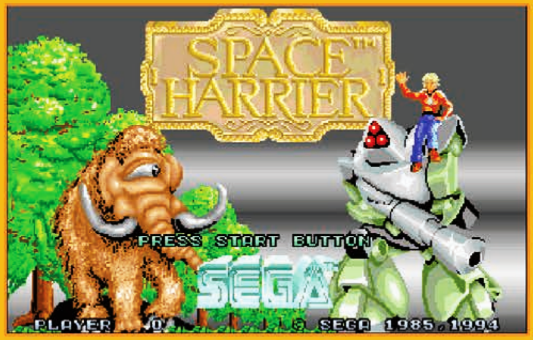
SEGA
Space Harrier
32X
MEGA DRIVE
32X
SEGA
TOP 1000000
SCORE 920
STAGE 1



Space Harrier -

Released in 1985 to the arcades, Space Harrier was a unique third-person shooter made by Sega. The game was a hit and quite popular and it spawned a number of sequels as well as ports to several home consoles. Until the 32X version, however, none of the home ports had quite replicated the arcade experience well enough. In Space Harrier you play the role of Harri, the last of the Sentinels in charge of protecting Dragonland. Unfortunately, the evil forces of Velda had invaded Dragonland and eliminated all the Sentinels. Harri, as the last Sentinel, is the last hope Dragonland has to be free once again and must travel through the various provinces of Dragonland to reach the capital city and defeat Velda.

As he travels through the provinces, Harri will have to face many dangers, dangers that get worse as he nears the capital. This port of Space Harrier really captures the action from the arcade and is able to replicate the scaling from the original quite well. The music, speech, and sound effects are all here making this a very accurate translation. The action in Space Harrier is fast and frenetic but the excellent response from the controller makes it fun. There are four levels of difficulty to choose from and you can even select the number of lives you want to have (3 or 5). Fans of Space Harrier should not miss this version of the game. If you've never played Space Harrier, this is the version you need to try. ■



Title:
Space Harrier

Genre:
Sega Scaler 3D Arcade Classic Shooter

Developer:
Sega Development Division #2

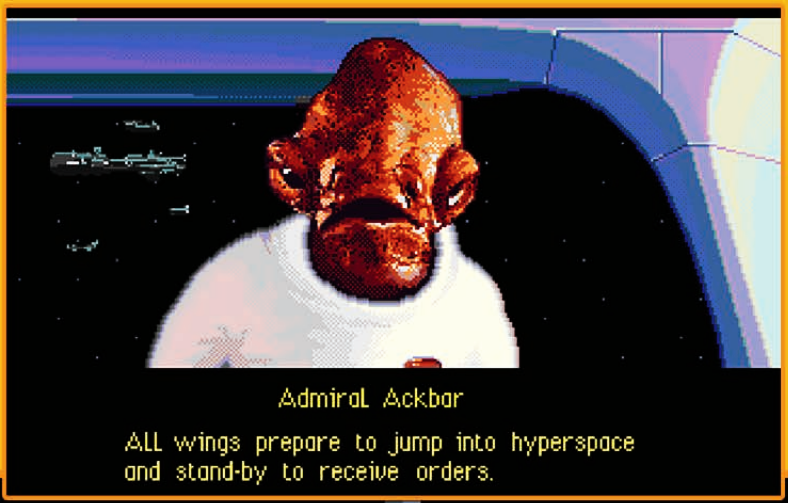
Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega

SEGA
STAR WARS
ARCADE
32X
MEGADRIVE
LucasArts

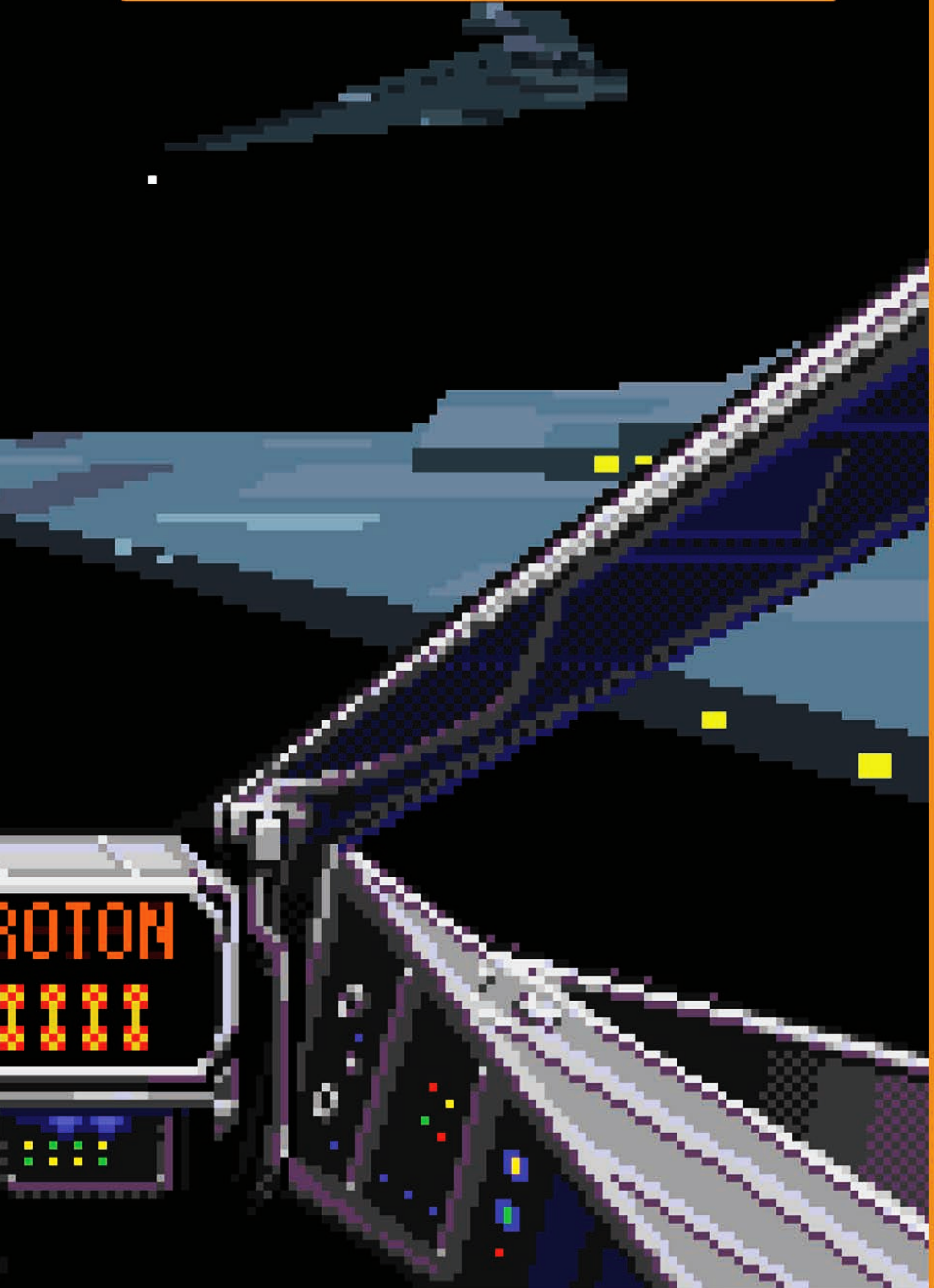
Empire's Fleet
Super Star Destroyer
Death Star
Reactor
10%
CONTINUE?
YES
9
NO

8
PRO



Admiral Ackbar

All wings prepare to jump into hyperspace
and stand-by to receive orders.



Star Wars Arcade -

Long ago in a galaxy far, far away... These are words that will never be forgotten as they are the words that introduced many of us to a remarkable space fantasy saga called Star Wars. Several arcade games were created inspired by these movies, including a quite famous vector version by Atari released in 1983. Ten years later, Sega created their own arcade version of Star Wars (based on A New Hope) which was ported to the 32X a year later. This port has two versions of the game for the player to select - arcade and 32X modes. Arcade mode is a direct port of the original, while the 32X mode adds four new levels. In two player mode, both players work together with one acting as pilot and the other as gunner; however, both players have the ability to fire weapons.

The missions you must complete mostly involve destroying TIE fighters in open space, though there will be Star Destroyers shooting at you as well. In 32X mode you'll be in two dogfights with TIE fighters, skimming the Death Star surface, attacking a Super Star Destroyer, battling in the Death Star trenches, completing a search and destroy mission, and working to destroy the Death Star itself. Game graphics are very nicely done and the music and sound effects really add to the quality of the game. Game control, however, takes some getting used to and it is definitely best to use the 6-Button controller. Overall, though, a very good game.■

Title:
Star Wars Arcade

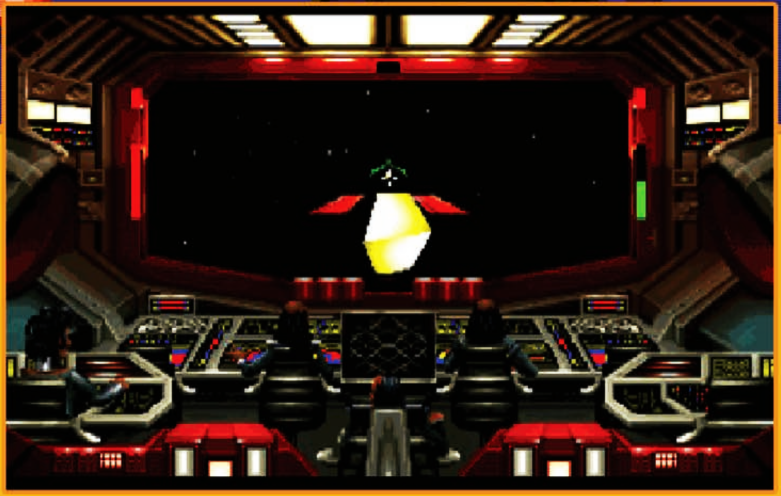
Genre:
Classic Arcade Shoot'em Up

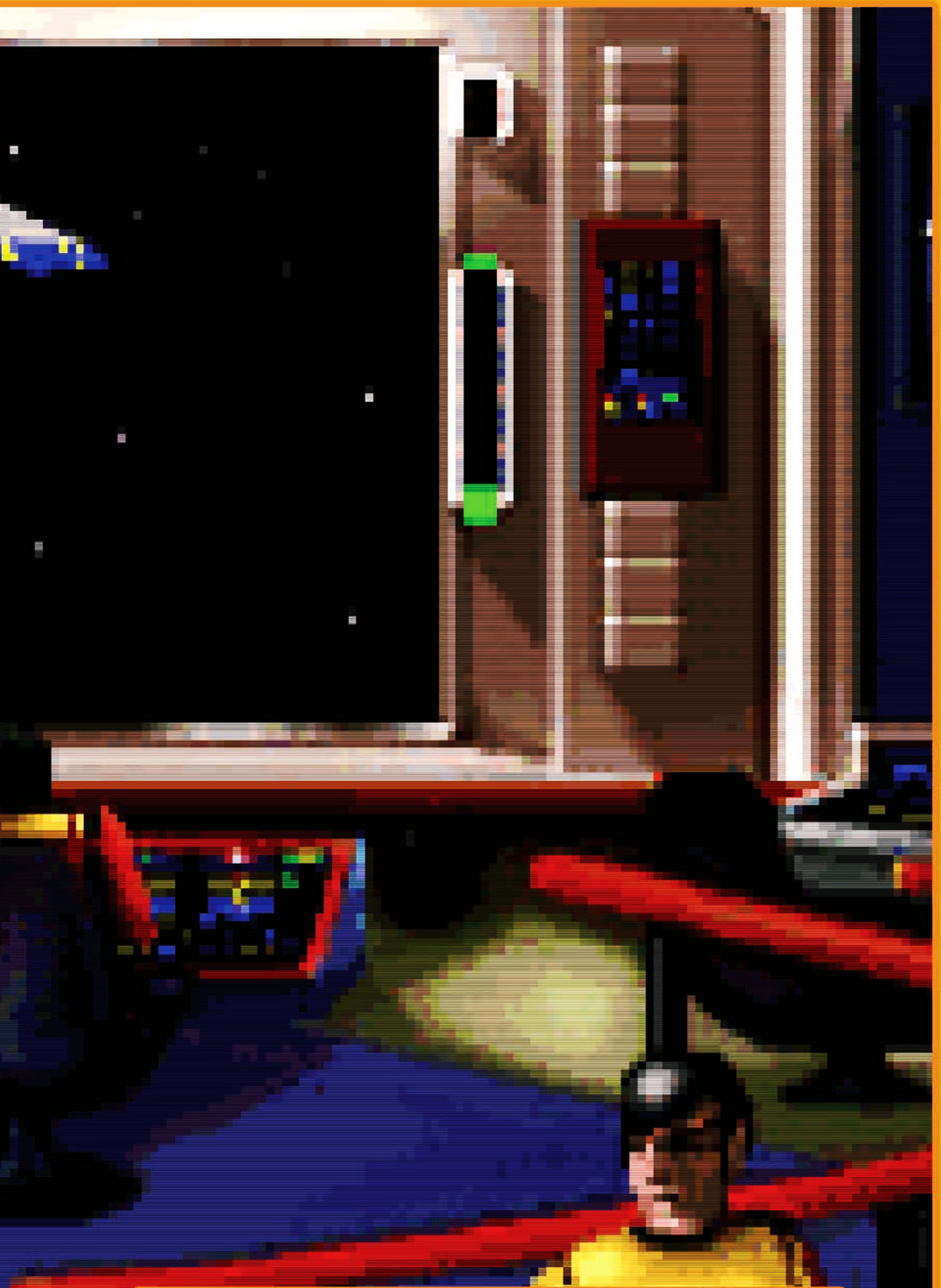
Developer:
Sega Interactive Development

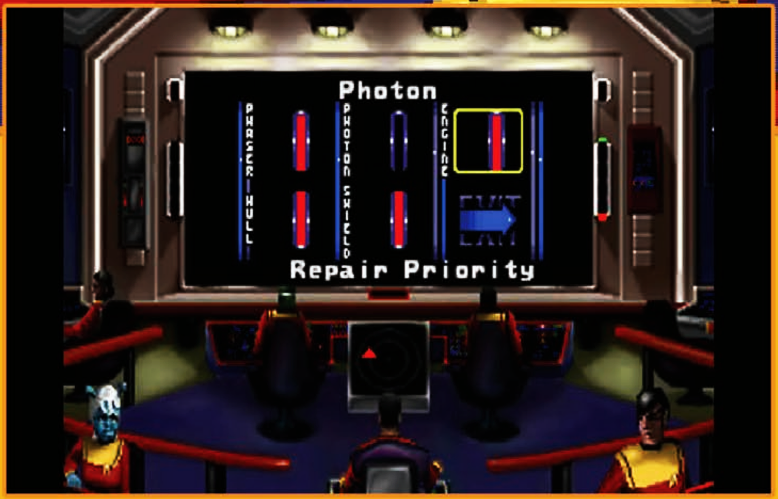
Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
SEGA

SEGA
STAR TREK
STARFLEET ACADEMY
32X
GENESIS
Starship Bridge Simulator
KIDS TO ADULTS
KA
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY





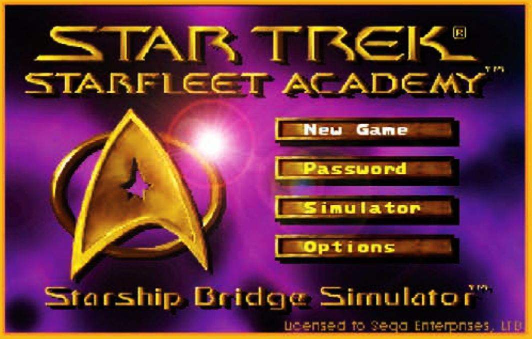

Photon
PHASER
HULL
PHOTON
SHIELD
ENGINE
Repair Priority

SEGA 32X

Star Trek : Starfleet Academy-Starship Bridge Simulator

For many Star Trek fans there weren't a hell of a lot of titles that were based on the popular sci-fi show and many Trekkies felt left out in the cold. With the release of Starfleet Academy Starship Bridge Simulator this situation changed. The game is a simulation title that was released by Interplay in 1994 for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and later ported and published and developed by High Voltage Software for the Sega 32X in 1995. It is similar in some respects to the PC/Mac game Star Trek: Starfleet Academy that was released in 1997.

Bridge Simulator has over 20 simulated missions in the final frontier to play within. You could command five different starships, from science vessels to Constitution-class heavy cruisers on a variety of missions ranging from scientific research to diplomacy missions with various encounters with different aliens. The game sees you on the bridge of Starfleet's finest vessels, in the toughest situations that the Federation can devise. The graphics were very good for the time on the 32X with highspeed 3D polygon graphics. Becoming a Starfleet Academy cadet and working your way towards becoming a Starfleet Captain, piloting different starships (including the Klingon battle cruiser and the Romulan Bird-of-Prey) there is nothing not to like if you are a Star Trek fan. ■


STAR TREK®
STARFLEET ACADEMY™
New Game
Password
Simulator
Options
Starship Bridge Simulator™
Licensed to Sega Enterprises, LTD

Title:
Star Trek : Starfleet Academy-Starship Bridge Simulator

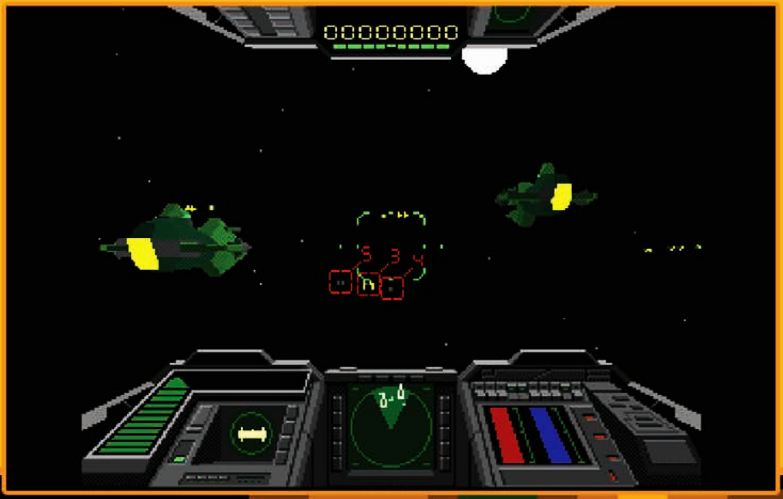
Genre:
A 3D Starship Combat & Operations Simulator

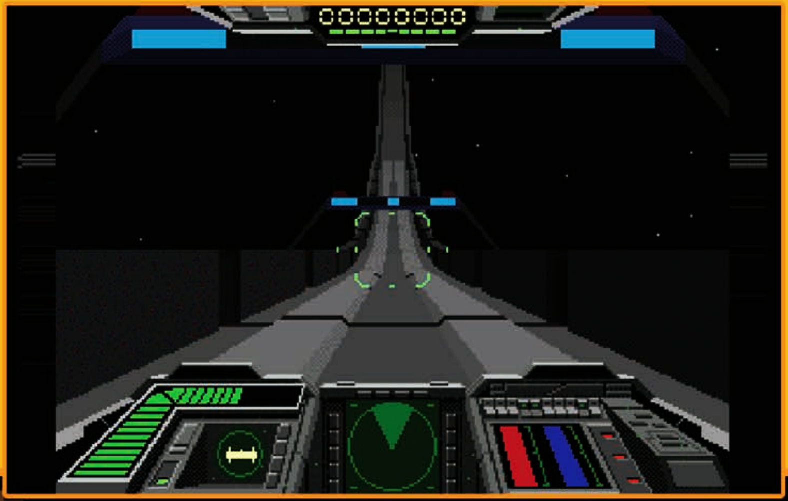
Developer:
High Voltage Software

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Interplay

SEGA
STELLAR ASSAULT
32X
MEGADRIVE 32X
SEGA

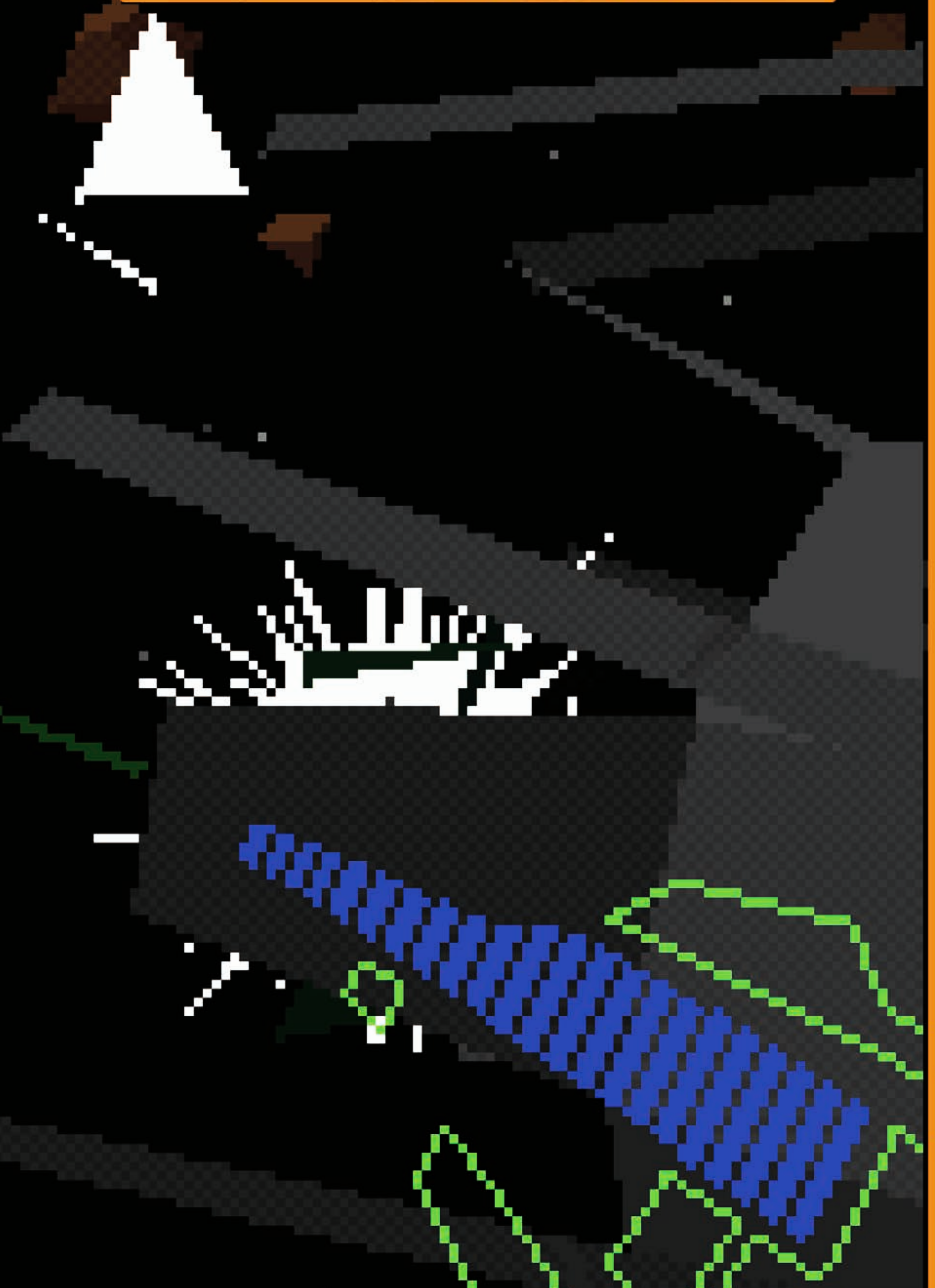




Stellar Assault -

You are a member of Stellar Assault, the pride of the Fleet Academy and the defenders of The Planetary Systems. You were only a Cadet First Class until a short moment ago when you got a field promotion to Captain and to Flight Officer! The enemy has attacked Outpost 51 in sector 7 and the Acceleration Gate that can get the fleet from Sector 11 to the area is not yet complete. You must go into Sector 7 and attack the enemy and stop them on their tracks. Fail and the 17 major planetary systems will be in danger. Stellar Assault (aka Shadow Squadron in the U.S.) is a first-person space shooter for the 32X that not only looks great but also plays very well.

You select between two types of ships: Feather 1 or Feather 2. Feather 1 is a light fighter that comes equipped with auto laser guns (semi guided) and guided laser torpedoes and a Spectral Shield. This ship is highly manoeuvrable and lets you more easily target enemies. Feather 2 has heavy lasers, energy torpedoes, and strong shields (but not Spectral Shields). Stellar Assault has very nice graphics that take advantage of what the 32X can do. Some of the enemy ships are huge, so much so that you can even fly inside of them. Controller response, important for this type of game, is excellent but it does take some getting used to. The game is best enjoyed with a 6-Button controller. Overall a pretty good game for the 32X. ■



STELLAR ASSAULT™

Title:
Stellar Assault

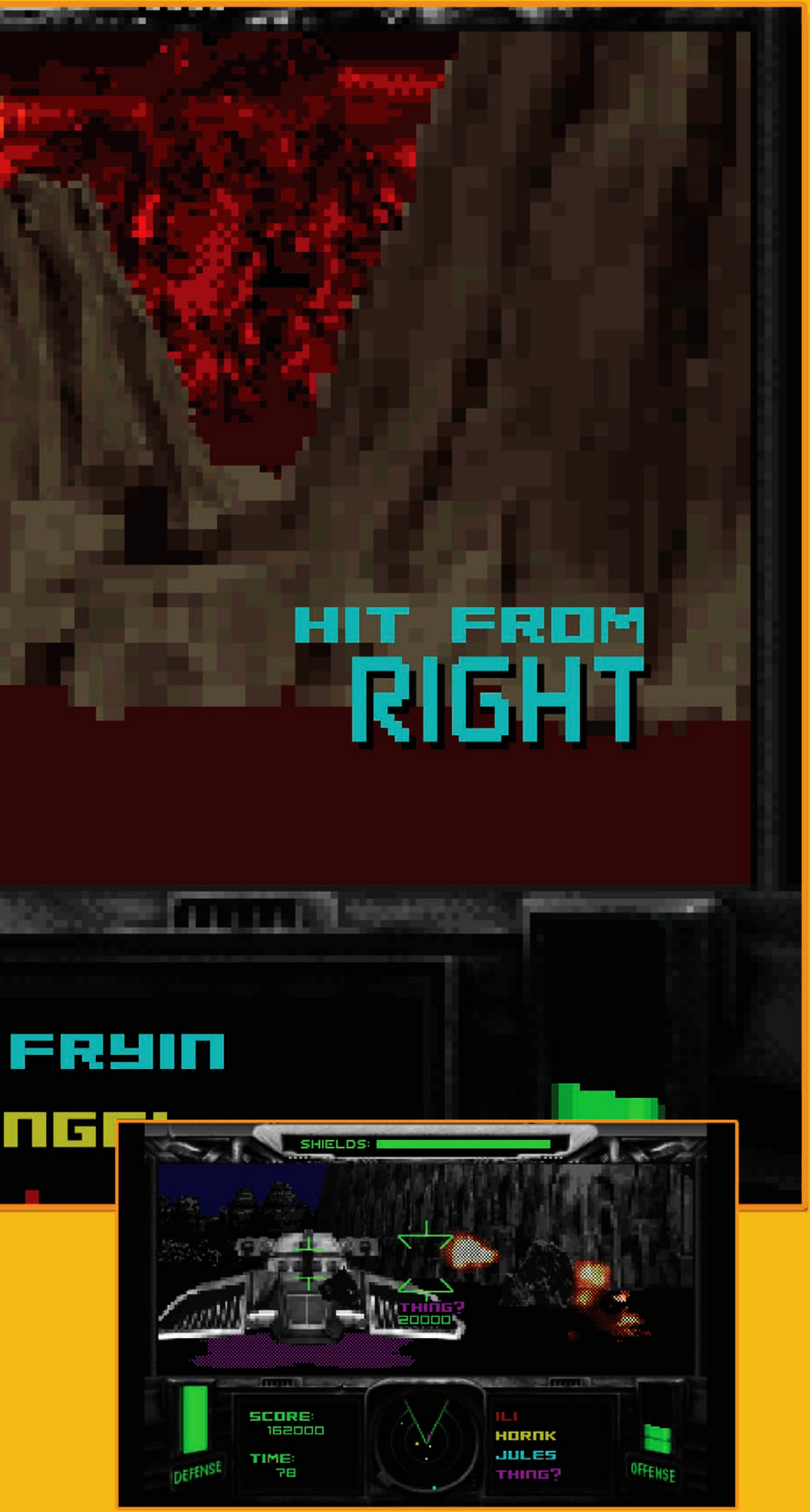
Genre:
3D Polygon Space Multi-Directional Shooter

Developer:
Sega CS

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega

I FRYIN
80000
SEGA
32X
T-MEK
MEGA DRIVE
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
AGES 6+
SEGA
SHIELDS:
CONFIRMED KILL:
DWEEZIL
20000 POINTS
CRASH
10000
SCORE:
185000
TIME:
50
ILI
ZOOOT
CRASH
DWEEZIL
DEFENSE
OFFENSE



T-Mek -

A relic reborn from the mid-nineties that saw Atari arcade game T-MEK, which appeared in July of 1994, come to the Sega 32X a year later. The story: the MEK Battle Tournament is being held and pilots are flocking to their MEKs (a hovering tank with special weapons and abilities) to challenge Nasrac the Eliminator, the undisputed champion of the MEK Battle Tournament. You play as one of the pilots eager to show their MEK skills in this tournament. The 32X port of T-MEK faithfully recreates this experience for home console gamers. The only major difference is that multiplayer is achieved with split-screen gaming instead of the link-up feature used in the arcade.

Starting the game will allow you to choose one of six MEKs. Each come with different stats and characteristics: some are slow with heavy firepower, where others are well-armoured and manoeuvre fast. You'll want to experiment to find which MEK best suits your style of play here and it's great to see the developers of the game go to great lengths to make each MEK unique in design and control. Graphically, it's fantastic to see a 32X game that makes amazing use of the hardware. Every stage utilises the 32X's superior scaling capabilities superbly, rendering the game's scenery in a similar way to the likes of Space Harrier. T-MEK is definitely worthy of your interest if you can find a copy at a decent price. ■

T-MEK™
1 Player
2 Players
Options

Title:
T-Mek

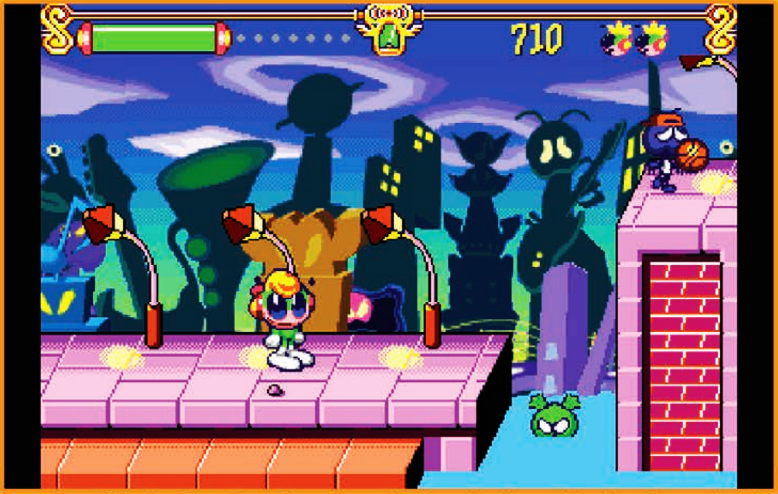
Genre:
A 3d Battle Tank Shoot'em Up Title

Developer:
BITS Corporation

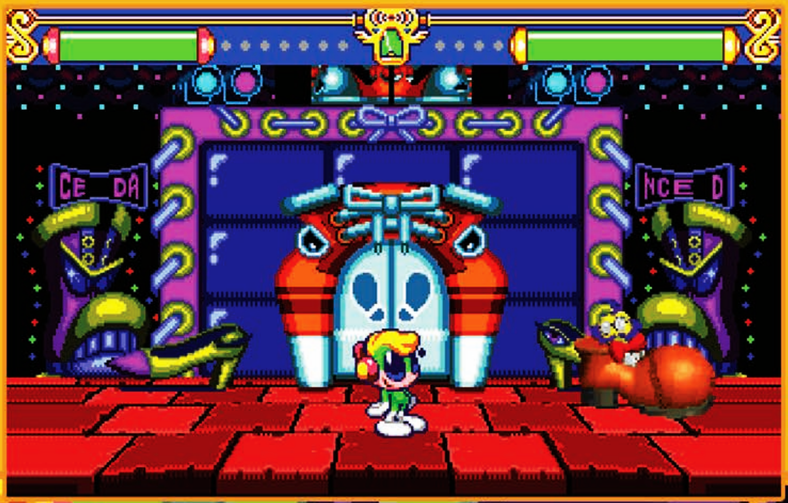
Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Time Warner Interactive

SEGA
TEMPO
32X
GENESIS
KIDS TO ADULTS
KA
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
84504


710

MAJOR MINOR SHO



Tempo -

Regarded as one of the better or more desirable games for the Sega 32X, Tempo is a solid 2D platformer with great audio/visual qualities. It was developed by Red Entertainment and published by Sega in 1995 and is ranked in the top 10 of 32X games. But that wasn't the case when I first started playing it as I was put off by the animation priority the player character had. Given time to acclimate to the game play you will wind up enjoying Tempo. Almost immediately, the stellar audio/visual qualities of Tempo are on display. The game opens with a period, Saturday morning cartoon-style hip-hop song about the eponymous Tempo and it ushered in a wave of nostalgia for that time in my life.

The game has strong musical overtones and accordingly each stage features, at the very least, a rocking accompaniment. One stage in particular appears to take place in a boom box and features many of the mechanisms one would suspect to see, only now they operate as platforming obstacles. Visually, the stages are a wonder to behold. The level design isn't particularly noteworthy other than the fact that the stages aren't simply "scroll to the right" affairs. The paths are generally linear, but the word-of-mouth praise I've always heard for Tempo holds true. It's definitely worth seeking out if you are a Sega 32X collector. ■

TEMPO™
PRESS START BUTTON
(C) SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD. 1995
ORIGINAL CHARACTERS (C) RED 1995

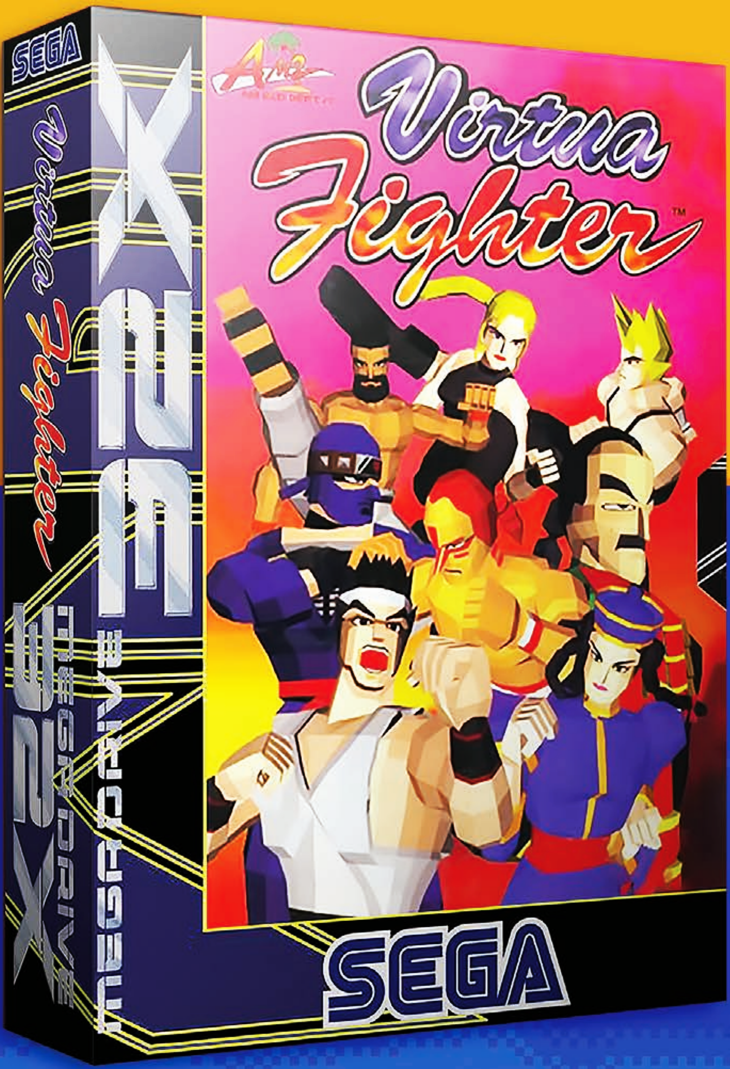
Title:
Tempo

Genre:
A Funky Musical Action Platform Title

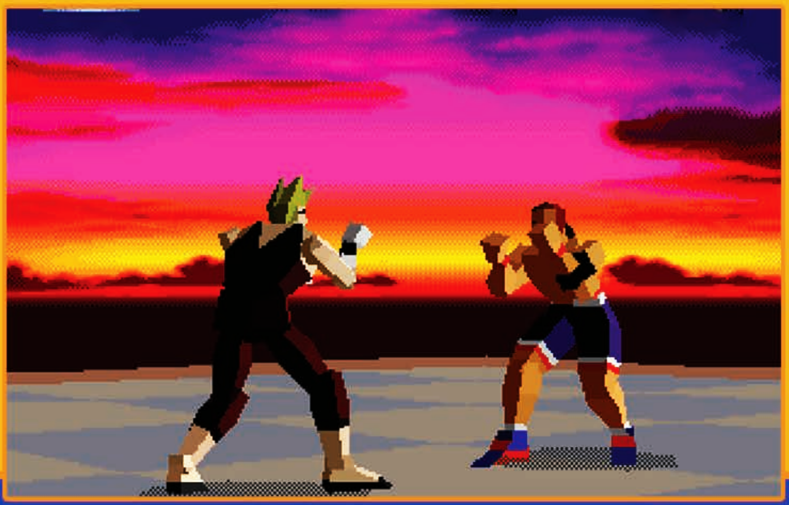
Developer:
Red

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
Virtua Fighter
32X
MEGADRIVE
Virtua Fighter
SEGA

TIME
PRESS START BUTTON
AKIRA
ROUND 1
29"33
JACKY
0"67



Virtua Fighter -

If you try and explain Virtua Fighter to someone who didn't play it back in the day please try and refrain from using the phrase 'in my day', it won't be pretty and probably won't end well either. The thing is the characters looked bowling shoe ugly back then being clunky and blocky with uninspired names like Wolf and Akira. However, the visuals were not the 3D aspect that wowed people and showed off the capacity of the 32X.

It was the arenas that made this a revolutionary game-changer. Again they were nothing to write home about in terms of animation, they were just beaches, deserts and grasslands devoid of any life but they were 3D. Playing any other fighter game you could go left, right, duck and jump. This game literally gave you another dimension allowing you to move around the fighting stage. Tired of being spammed in a fight by a friend on another game? No worries, step around them here and hit them off the platform for a quick win. That's right if you literally fell off the platform you would lose. Often with an undignified stumble like tripping off a curb on a night out. Perfect. ■

Virtua Fighter™
PRESS START BUTTON
(C) 1995 SEGA. All rights reserved.

Title:
Virtua Fighter

Genre:
Arcade 3D Polygon 1 Vs 1 Fighter

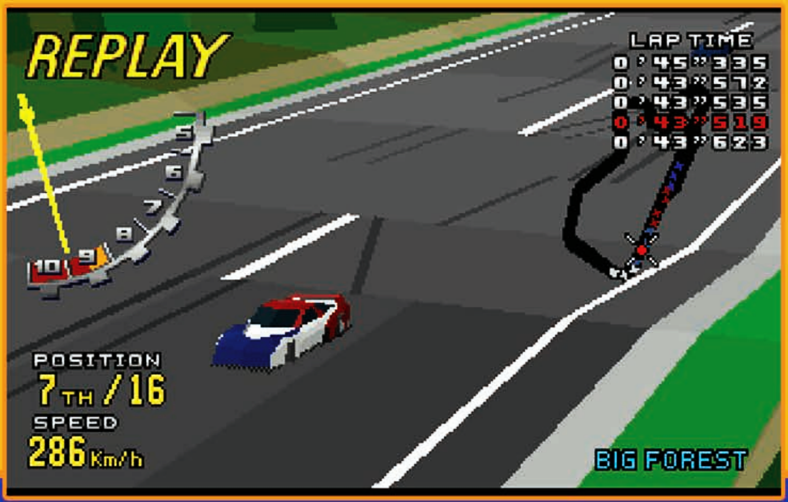
Developer:
SEGA-AM2 Co., LTD.

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
SEGA of America, Inc.

SEGA
V.R.
Virtua Racing
DELUXE
32X
MEGADRIVE
SEGA

POSITION
15TH / 16
TIME
60
LAP TIME
0'15"602
SPEED
268 Km/h
BIG FOREST



Virtua Racing Deluxe -

Virtua Racing (VR) was one of those "WOW" moments in my gaming lifetime. The arcade cab was worth every penny of that two-pound coin. 3D graphics, blaring music and sound effects – it was peak arcade SEGA. Home ports were inevitable. While the Mega Drive conversion (complete with the Sega Virtua Processor chip) was a technical feat, the best conversion you'll find of Virtua Racing is on the 32X. This 'deluxe' version contains two new cars and two new tracks, meaning it's much more of a console game in its own right rather than a direct arcade port.

The action is fast, slick and cuts out the clunky feeling of the 16-bit version. You can enjoy the action from behind the car to a wonderful bird's eye view similar to arcade driving sims of the '80s. As well as the standard arcade mode you have a 'time attack' mode and the option to go head-to-head with a mate. The new cars and tracks are worth exploring but for all-out speed and VR fun you can't beat jumping into the F1 car and heading to the Big Forest track. There aren't many 32X games that are a must-own but this is certainly one of them. ■

V.R.™
Virtua Racing
DELUXE

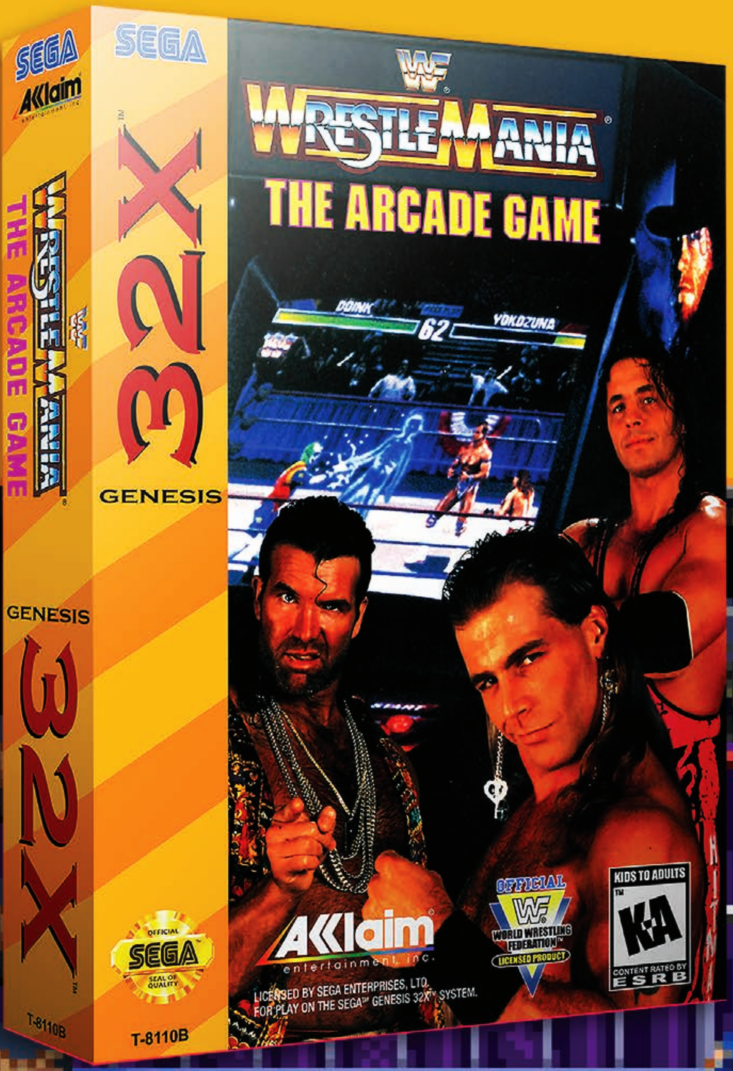
Title:
Virtua Racing Deluxe

Genre:
Arcade 3D Driving Title

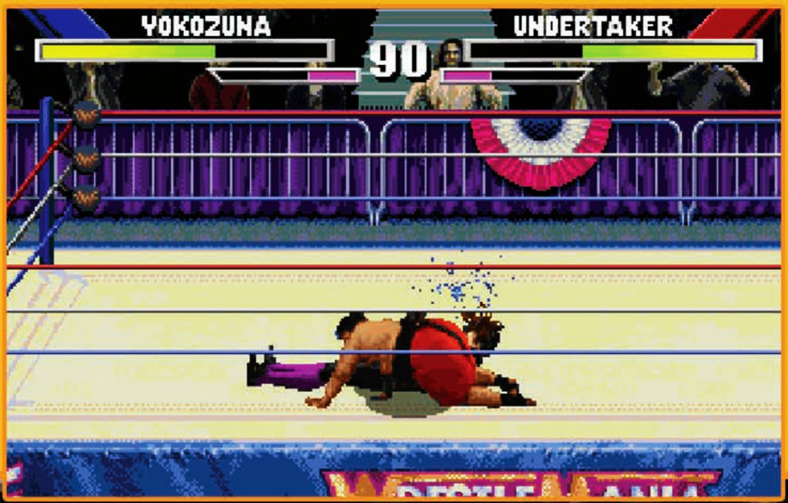
Developer:
Sega

Year Released:
1994

Publisher:
Sega


SEGA
Acclaim
WF
WRESTLEMANIA
THE ARCADE GAME
32X
GENESIS
DOINK
62
YOKOZUNA
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
Acclaim entertainment, inc.
OFFICIAL WF WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION LICENSED PRODUCT
KIDS TO ADULTS
KA
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
LICENSED BY SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. FOR PLAY ON THE SEGA GENESIS 32X SYSTEM.
T-8110B

RAZOR RAMON
99
BRET HART



WWF Wrestlemania:

The Arcade Game -

You either like wrestling or you don't. Then if you do, there will be a good chance you only like certain types of wrestling games. It gets very niche very quickly with this category. Which is why it is a good thing this isn't a wrestling game, though it is, but it isn't. What it is though is one of the very best games on the 32X and a brilliant port of an arcade game.

Midway was riding high in the mid-nineties as they had NBA Jam and Mortal Kombat franchises bringing in the money. So they created a Frankenstein love child of the two with this game. It had the photorealism of actual people along with a less violent fighting. Bret Hart literally bled out hearts instead of blood. It was goofy but not insulting, such as when Razor Ramon grew blade arms like MK's Baraka. It felt like a beat-em-up but the voice of Jerry Lawler on commentary kept that wrestling spirit. It even helped the WWF, which was struggling with the loss of 80's stars and steroid claims. Ultimately giving exposure to a batch of 'new generation' superstars and a rare game appearance by Doink the Clown. ■

WWF
WRESTLEMANIA
MIDWAY

Title:
WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game

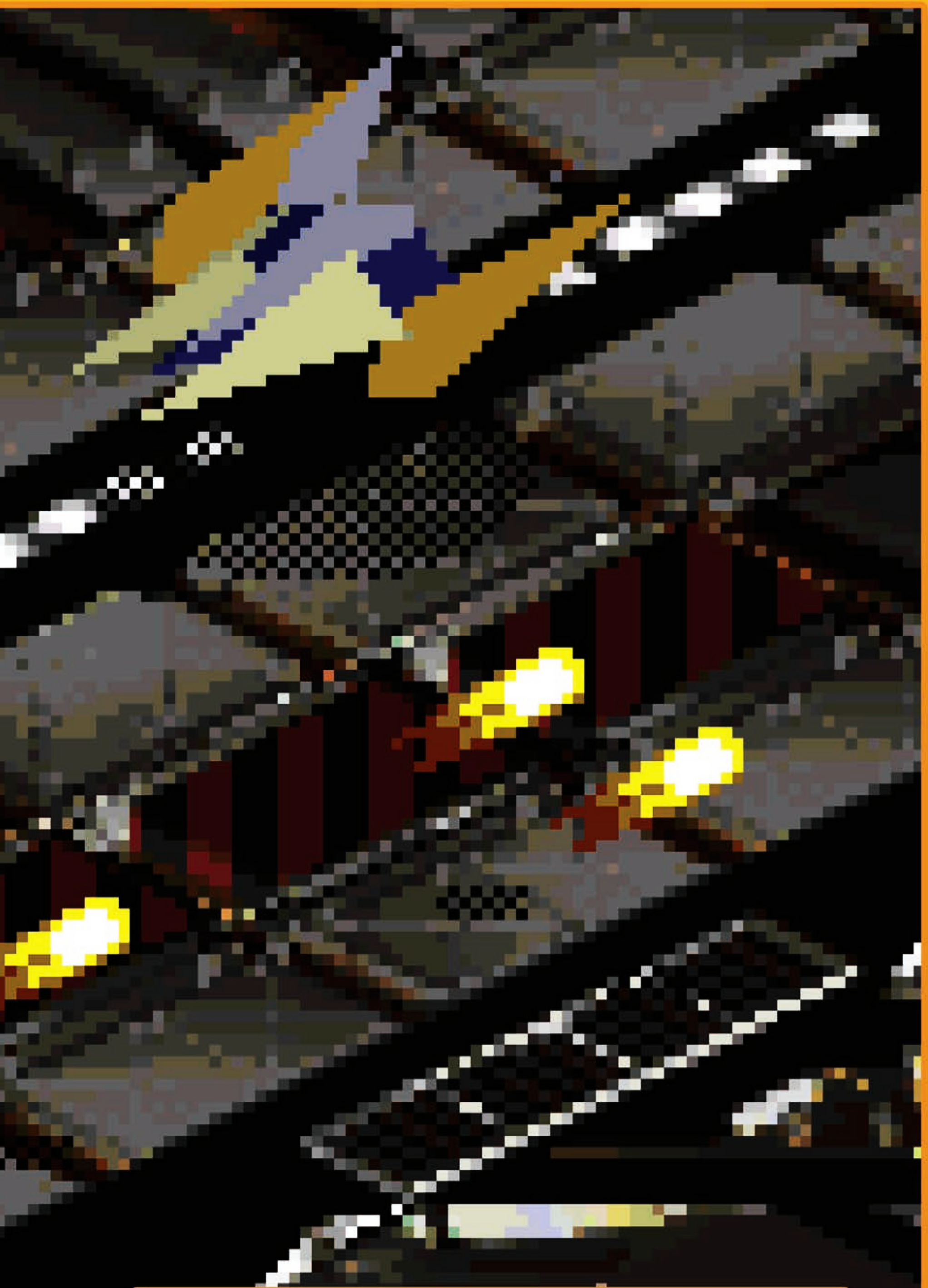
Genre:
Arcade Wrestling Ringside Brawler

Developer:
Midway / Sculptured Software

Year Released:
1985

Publisher:
Midway / Acclaim Entertainment

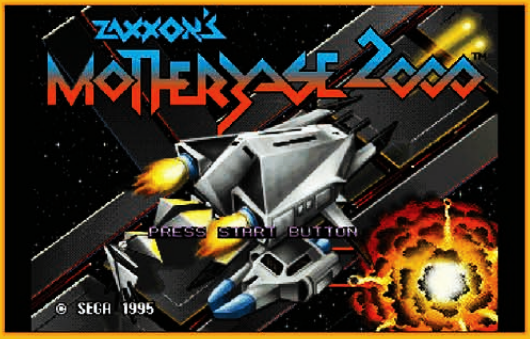
SEGA
MOTHERBASE
32X
MEGA DRIVE 32X
SEGA
CORE
JUMP
HACKING
LEARNING

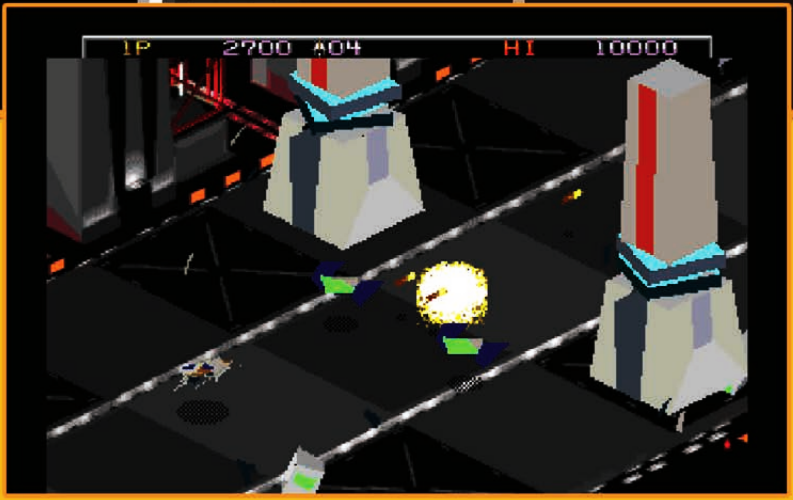


Zaxxon: Motherbase 2000 -

The original Japanese version of Zaxxon for the 32X was released under the name “Parasquad” while the European release went by “Motherbase”. As such, I’d be tempted to suggest that SEGA of America possibly renamed it with the Zaxxon name on the box to capture the consumer’s nostalgia back in 1995. It has all the makings of a game mapped up in an isometric playing field, yet the controls are a little fiddly: it takes a while to adjust to the fact that the directional controls that exist on every other game are irrelevant here and need to be re-learnt but there’s no real way to control pitch and fall. Instead, your craft can just jump. But Zaxxon: Motherbase 2000 is actually kind of clever.

It was advanced for its time, even if the aesthetic it chose has long started to show its age. While taking inspiration from Virtua Fighter/Virtua Racing, Zaxxon Motherbase is an early adopter of a 3D polygon-based engine, moving away from the 2D sprites and tile-maps that were then the norm. You will discover a very well-made scrolling shoot ’em up. There’s so many clever little touches and inspired design choices going on that it’s hard to explain why Zaxxon Motherbase never profited from a bigger following. Many 32X adopters marched on regardless in the hopes of finding reward and were pleasantly surprised to find it here with Zaxxon: Motherbase 2000, a game very much worth having a go. ■





Title:
Zaxxon: Motherbase 2000 A.K.A.Parasquad

Genre:
A 3D Polygon Isometric Shoot’em up

Developer:
CRI Middleware

Year Released:
1995

Publisher:
Sega

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Designer: Darren Doyle

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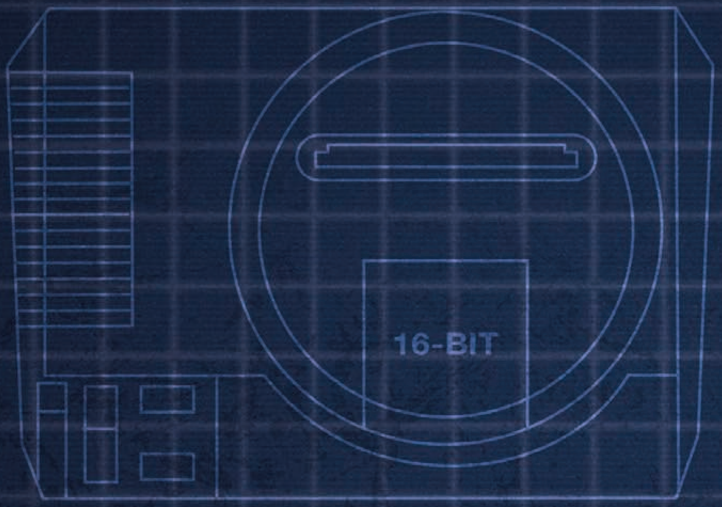
POWER
OFF



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